



TALENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK



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INTRODUCTION TO THE TALENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK (TSF)

The Talent System Framework (TSF) is an evolution of the Talent Development Framework, providing greater clarity of the ideal experiences and environments that will support a player's journey through the Talent System.

The purpose hasn't changed - the framework has just evolved to offer a more detailed reference and support system for all those operating in the Talent System.

There is further information regarding the qualities of a 'Complete Player' (previously called the 'End in Mind'). This section includes more hockey information to support players' and coaches' understanding of the game and of the highly skilled actions required to excel.



PURPOSE

OF THE TALENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK (TSF)

- ▶ Offer a **reference point** for **decision-making**
- ▶ Provide a **common language** for the development of players through the talent system across Great Britain
- ▶ Allow for a **shared understanding** to guide player development – putting players at the centre
- ▶ **Empower coaches** to become the architects of **exceptional learning environments**
- ▶ Educate and support **key stakeholders** in how they can support a player's journey through the talent pathway

Each Home Nation National Governing Body (NGB) will align to the Talent System Framework and apply it through their lens, based on their own priorities and needs.

The TSF is made up of five sections that help us to share and tell the ever-evolving 'story' in the development of talent:

- 1 WHAT IS TALENT?**
- 2 THE TALENT JOURNEY**
- 3 THE TALENT SYSTEM**
- 4 COMPLETE PLAYER QUALITIES**
- 5 PARTNERSHIPS**

SECTION 1 WHAT IS TALENT?

We will all have our own definitions of what talent is. This may be a combination of our experiences as a player, coach, parent, our knowledge of research in this area, and what we have observed and digested from other sports, the media, and other publications.

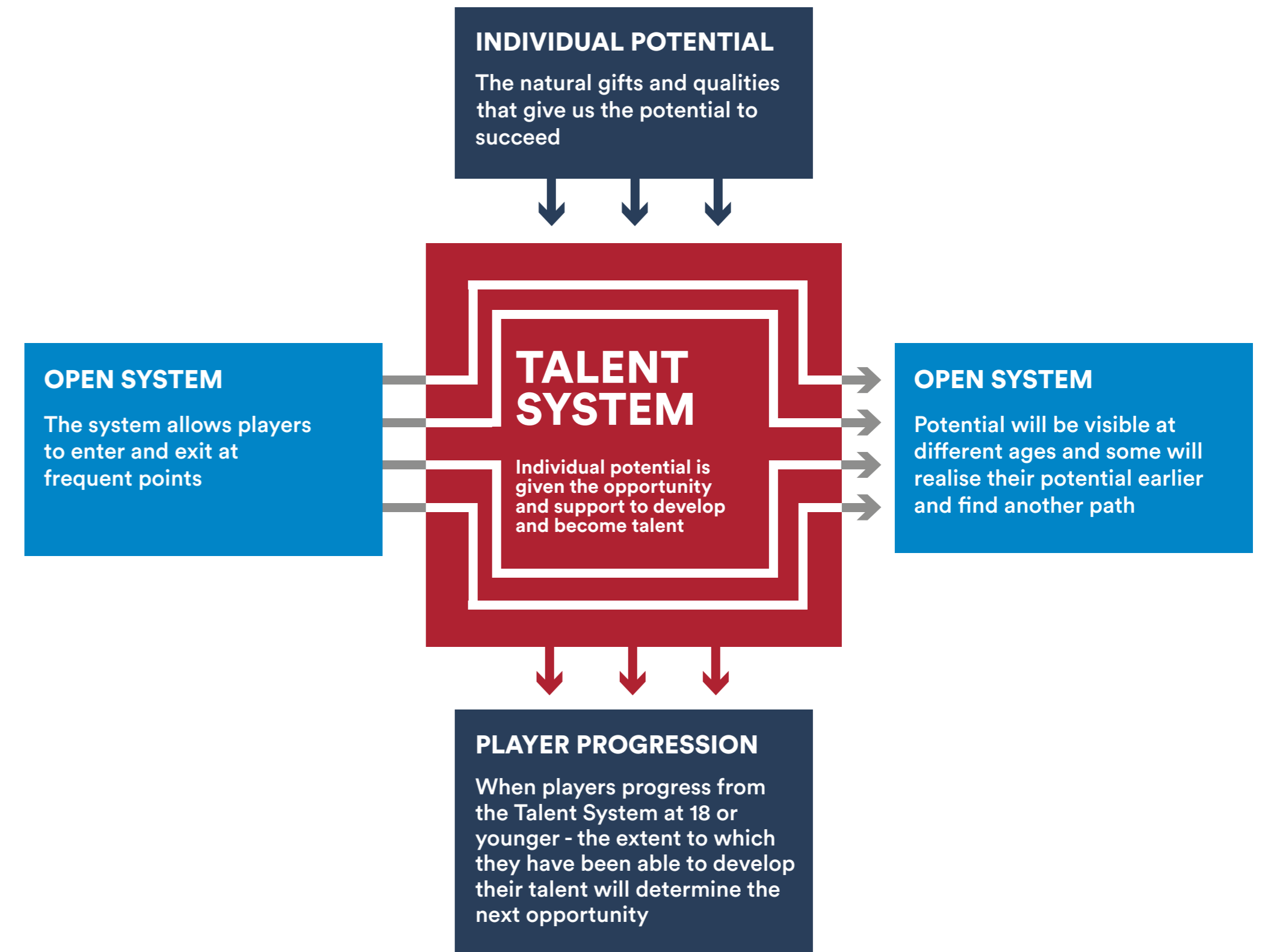
Having a written, shared definition and understanding is not just an academic exercise; it is a fundamental piece of the puzzle that sits behind talent. It is something to come back to when we encounter problems and have decisions to make.

TALENT DEFINITION

Talent is developed from potential. Everyone has a certain amount of 'natural giftedness'. This natural make-up we all come with is unique to each of us and is only the starting point. We do not define this as talent, and do not describe players with an abundance of natural gifts as 'talented'. We would describe them as 'having potential'. Talent is what you develop from these natural beginnings - through experiences and training.

For example, a child with fantastic hand-eye co-ordination develops over a number of years this unique ability into a fantastic first touch, knowing exactly what angle their stick should be at and how soft their hands should be to manipulate the ball into exactly the right position for their next action - this first touch is a talent for hockey.

OUR TALENT SYSTEM





Hockey is an “early sampling, late specialisation sport”.

This means that ideally, we want players to have some experience and connection to the sport early on, the ‘sampling’. We also want them to have a broad range of sporting and athletic experiences as they develop, before focusing more on hockey in their mid-late teenage years, the ‘specialisation’. We can contrast this with an early specialisation sport such as gymnastics, where a different definition may be appropriate.

The question that could be asked is at what point do they move from “having potential” to “being talented”. We should be saving the use of the word ‘talented’ for the top performers of the game, when they consistently demonstrate their talents in Elite Competition, whether that be the domestic or international game.

You might feel the use of ‘potential’ and ‘talented’ is semantics, but studies show that being labelled ‘talented’ (as opposed to being ‘high-potential’) can be detrimental to development. ‘Potential’ suggests players have a gap to bridge and in this way can be constructive and motivational. Being labelled ‘talented’ can give a sense of ‘already made it’, possibly leading to some behaviours that are less desirable.

POTENTIAL

TALENTED

As the young person progresses, they will go through many experiences with coaches, schools, sports, family members and peer groups which will shape the development of their talent. All individuals actively make choices, which add up over the years and will influence how their talent is developed.

We all differ in what captivates our attention. At points those with ‘potential’ may lack interest or feel less motivated. This may slow the progress of their development, but does not mean that this won’t change or shift in time. Many players have very ‘bumpy’ journeys on their way to the top.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The following principles will underpin our approach to talent identification and development

1 Recognising talent is about future potential not just current performance

Current performance plays a part in understanding future potential but in isolation is a poor indicator and should not be relied on by itself. Other indicators of future potential are:

- **Superstrengths** – current superstrength of a player that sets them apart from others
- **Level of all the Player Qualities** (see Chapter 4)
- **Intent to learn** – players who can respond positively to a learning stimulus. This can be a differentiating factor of potential meaning they progress faster than their peers
- **Physical, psychological, social maturation** – understanding how mature a person is in relation to their peers in all these three domains can indicate how much room for growth exists
- **Relative Hockey and Physical Training age** – determining how much time has been spent in quality environments on a hockey field and performing specific physical training can also indicate how much more room for growth there is

It is important that we continually re-evaluate our view on a player/s potential. Constantly re-assessing is critical.

2 RARE principles - Right Athlete Right Environment

A young person's experience is shaped by the environments they inhabit so matching the environment to their physical, mental and social needs at any point in time is critical to ensuring they can thrive, develop and enjoy their time.

Knowing what is right for an individual, placing the player at the heart of any decision.

You can find out more about the RARE principles on page (add the page of the new section for RARE) and how to help them thrive page (the page number of the player experience model).

3 Open, inclusive and 'keep the net wide' approach

We know that selecting talent is tricky. With this in mind, one of the most important things is that our talent system is 'open' with opportunities to join / re-join over many years. We have plenty of examples where players have not played age group hockey but have still been a successful senior international.

Inclusivity is about all people (irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability) fitting in and feeling comfortable. We all have a responsibility to support one another feeling welcome and integrated.

'Keeping the net wide' refers to allowing opportunity for more players to develop their gifts over longer periods. Selection and decisions should be at 'this point in time' and not a final decision.

4 Multiple opportunities; multiple eyes; multiple contexts

Providing opportunity for players to perform over numerous contexts, such as training and matches in different environments, allows greater opportunity for them to demonstrate their potential.

Having multiple eyes on players, whether that be coaches, teachers, managers, or scouts, allows a more comprehensive view. Multiple opportunities allows us to work with players over a longer period of time to fully inform ourselves about the player rather than a one-off snapshot.

5 Quality and frequency of training and competition

Providing frequent, high quality, enjoyable training and competition is the bedrock of developing talent.

Partnerships between school, club, county and other stakeholders are key in providing more consistent messages to players, whilst keeping the player at the heart.

SECTION 2 TALENT JOURNEY

Every single player who has pulled on a GB or Home Nation shirt for an official cap has a different version of their talent journey

As we have heard, the talent journey starts from the moment a player is born. Born with certain abilities, these will in part, help them along their talent journey. Every decision that is made by them, or for them - e.g. which school/club, what interests they have etc. will all start to influence their journey. At some point there will be an introduction to hockey – for some born into a hockey playing family this may come early. For others, it may come later, perhaps at school by an enthusiastic primary or secondary teacher. No matter when that introduction to hockey happens, they start on their hockey journey.

From then on, they will be faced with a series of choices. At some point someone (a coach, parent or even themselves) realise that actually they are quite good ('having potential'). That they have qualities that help them to stand out from others. That could be their speed, their hand-eye coordination or the speed of their hands when eliminate opposition.

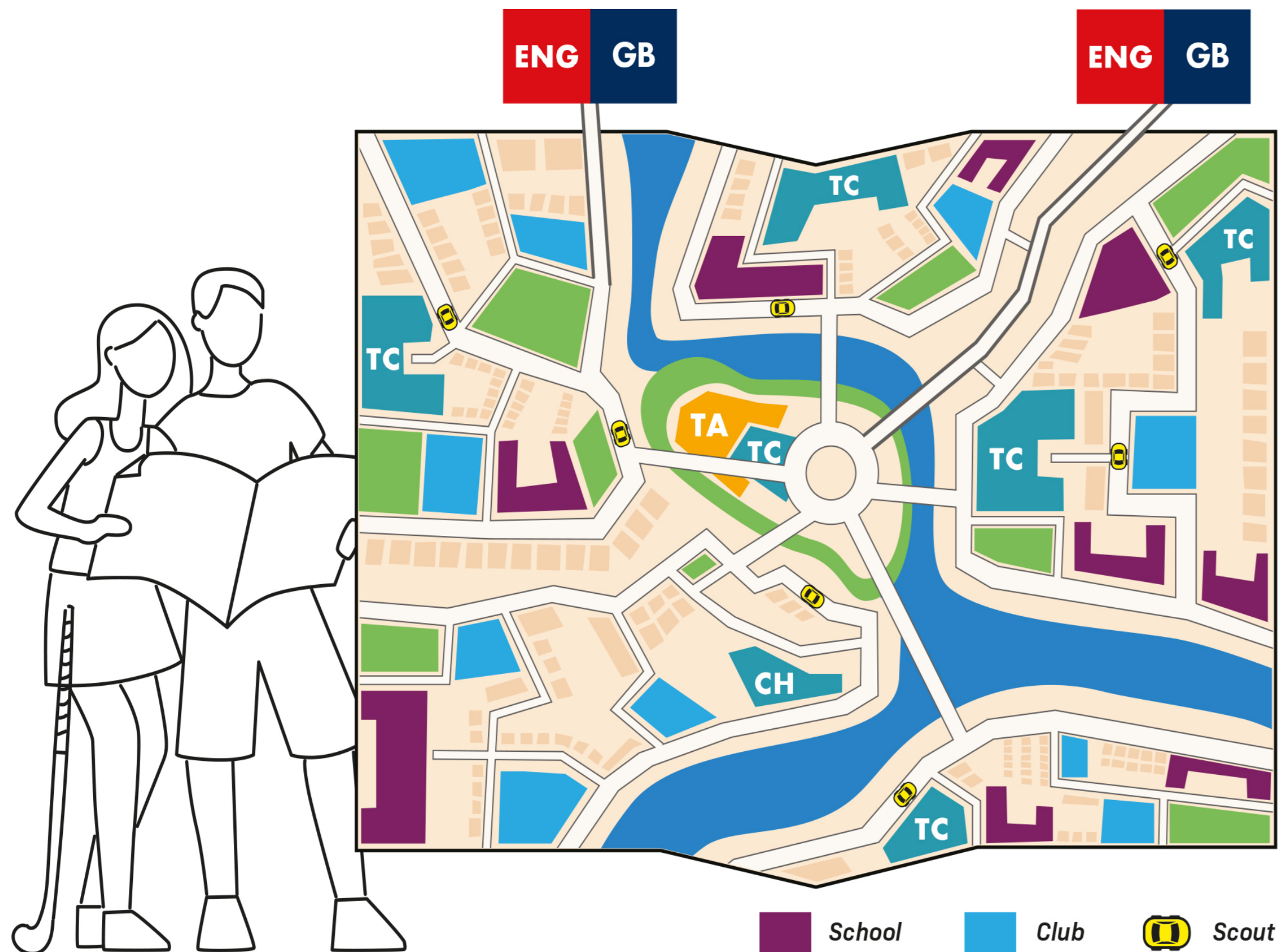
The environment that surrounds their hockey, whether that be at school, at a club, in their garden with their family or friends will all continue to influence their talent journey. There will be a moment when they begin to take hockey more seriously, realise this is the sport for them and that they want to become the best they can possibly be. That moment might come when they are 12, it might come when they are 22. That's the beauty of the talent development journey - each individual is different.

The talent development journey only ends when they decide to stop pursuing excellence or they are forced to stop because of a serious injury. Other than for injury, when they choose to stop is their decision. Some might say 'deselection stopped me', and that may be true at that moment, but it is still each individual's choice whether to continue on their talent development journey. Is the energy it takes to become better at hockey worth expending for the reward at the end? How much are they enjoying it and what does it bring to their life? **Each individual is in control of this decision.**



TALENTOPIA

TALENT DEVELOPMENT ROUTE MAP



Talentopia is used to help explain the new Talent System.

Using this framework, the latest research about Talent Development and the principles that underpin talent development for England Hockey (outlined on page 7 - TALENT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES), we have developed a new talent system that is less rigid and structured and allows for many more entry, exit and re-entry points.

Talent development is a non-linear and long-term process.

Players have traditionally progressed along a linear pathway via county, regional and national teams. Heavily constrained by time, this is primarily a filtering system, especially at the early stages. The focus of the new talent system is on talent development and supporting more high-quality environments where players can thrive, develop and enjoy playing hockey with multiple ways to progress. Clubs, schools and county hockey all have their part to play in this more flexible system with different environments to meet the needs of different players.

Each environment a player is exposed to will influence the journey they take – whether it be a school, university, club, talent centre or talent academy. There is no right or wrong way to progress, and as we have seen over the past there are many different journeys that can take you to the top of the game (see the following pages with a variety of talent journeys).

RIGHT ATHLETE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

[RARE]

Players have traditionally progressed along a linear pathway structure via county, regional, national teams. In contrast, there is not a definitive entry point to the new England Hockey Talent System. The Talent System is the combination of people and environments which provide opportunities for gifted players to develop their potential, with multiple ways to progress.

There are thousands of young people taking part in hockey who are all progressing at different rates and in different ways in different places. Therefore, there are many factors to consider when deciding the best environment for each person.

A young person's experience is shaped by the environments they inhabit, so matching the environment to their physical, mental, and social needs at any point in time is critical to ensuring they can thrive, develop, and enjoy their time playing hockey.

Through accreditation and licensing, England Hockey will recognise club, school and county environments within the Talent System which provide high quality talent development environments. It will actively provide advice and guidance to players, parents and coaches on decisions aligned to training and competing within the most appropriate environments, to ensure that all aspects of a player's development are considered.

However, England Hockey is not looking to instigate the movement of large numbers of players between clubs or stipulate the combination of club, school, and County Hockey for most junior players.

The RARE principles are intended to support players and parents to make good decisions about the most appropriate hockey environment(s) to attend.

These principles will guide the direction of a player's journey and will be the backdrop to the conversations that occur between all parties engaged in a player's programme. With the player at the centre, this should ensure they are receiving the appropriate provision at any given time.

The principles will also help guide decisions about the best environment for a player on a day-to-day basis when there are multiple options available e.g. club and school hockey matches.

Questions where a RARE assessment could aid decision making include:

- 1 What combination of club, school, County Hockey, Talent Academy, National programme environments are best for me/my child?
- 2 Is it the right time for my child to move to a different club?
- 3 When is the right time for this individual to begin playing adult hockey and where should this be?
- 4 Should I accept/decline my invitation to join a Talent Academy on a full or affiliate basis?
- 5 How does this session/activity/game impact on a player's hockey programme and overall 'load'?
- 6 What is the optimum mix of hockey training and competition for this individual, distributed across multiple environments?

RIGHT ATHLETE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

[RARE]

RARE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Enable the player and their parents to take an educated decision, having acquired appropriate information and experience, and reviewed all the available options.
- 2 Decisions will be player centred and based on what is best for the individual player at that moment in time.
- 3 No party (coach, club, school, university, county, England Hockey) has 'ownership' of a player.
- 4 The final decision about which hockey environments a player attends rests with the player (and their parents/guardians).
- 5 England Hockey would like to help guide the process but not control it.
- 6 A clear understanding that the opinion of all stakeholders in current and prospective environments is important in the decision-making process.
- 7 All factors which make up a RARE assessment should be considered before a player changes environment.

RARE ASSESSMENT

In most cases, and if taken together, the factors listed provide a means for a comprehensive assessment as to whether a change in environment should be encouraged. If the change impacts most of the factors favourably then it is likely to be beneficial for the player.

The factors listed are not exclusive and there may be other reasons which support or oppose a decision about a temporary or permanent change to a player's competition and/or training environment. The relative weighting of factors will differ for each player.

The assessment purposely doesn't have a scoring matrix; however, players (parents) are encouraged to RAG rate (Red = negative, Amber= neutral, Green= positive) each factor and identify any which need to be weighted more heavily in their specific case.

Any decision will require judgment and consideration of the overarching question 'Is this in the best interests of this player at this time?'

RARE ASSESSMENT FACTORS

- What is a player's biological age and stage of development? Local hockey should be encouraged for most players below the age of 14 and those at the 'Developing Hockey' stage of playing.
- Will a new environment provide more frequent and higher quality training opportunities with coaches who have a track record of progressing players at the player's current stage of development?
- Will a new environment provide higher quality competition opportunities with sufficient pitch time in that higher quality competitive environment?
- What will be the sociological impact of the move? It is important that young players have a balanced lifestyle and time with their peer group and friends as well as those of a similar performance standard.
- Is the average total travel time per week required to attend the environment appropriate for the age/stage of the player?
- Is the overall life-load on the player appropriate, when considering hockey, other sports, academic commitments, travel, other responsibilities?
- Does the commitment to hockey versus other activities match the player's aspirations and current stage of development? What is the opportunity cost of the move for the player?
- What are the financial implications (training and match fees, travel costs, club membership, scholarship opportunities)?
- What is the track record and philosophy of the new environment in developing young players in a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable environment?
- What is the timescale for the movement - if permanent/long term is this sustainable for the player and their support team?

SARAH'S TALENT STORY

I lived in the Scottish Borders and absolutely loved sport as a kid. I was playing football and rugby with the local boys teams. Always wearing sports clothes and loved the constant challenge that boys sport presented.

When I went to High School I stopped playing rugby, it was a traditional state secondary where girls played hockey and boys played rugby. So I started playing hockey when I was 12/13. I continued playing football and I initially found hockey a bit of a stupid sport as we played on grass and it was more about who could hit the ball the hardest and get it to skip at the right time to jump the opponents stick than having a particular skill! But I saw the similarities with football so enjoyed playing it.

School put me forward for district trials in hockey and I played for the South Scotland borders team at U15 and U16 which is the first kind of Talent Identification in Scotland. It was here that I was first identified by Scottish Hockey I was told I am being picked as a wild card. They could see what I was trying to do but I didn't always have the skill to do what I was thinking (I had only been playing 2 years or so at this point – and on grass) but my football game understanding was really shining.

At this point I was playing both football and hockey for Scotland. I was spending more and more time on a hockey field. I had moved to the local hockey club which offered the chance to play on astro and with some great players around me like Janet Jack. My technical ability then started to improve.

At 17 I made the decision to stop playing football and to concentrate on hockey. I was doing well with Scottish football but at that point a youngster in the team would get the last 5 minutes of a match and at the same time it was being suggested that I had the opportunity to play in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games so hockey was on a real high and it felt the right thing to do.

The same season I made the decision to attend Edinburgh University to read Law. Where Sam Judge was coaching (ex-Scottish international) and I had a few great seasons playing for Scotland and the uni. I moved quickly through the age groups from U18 to U21 and into Senior all within a couple of years and had my first Scotland cap aged 18 versus South Africa in 2012. I played in the Commonwealth Games in 2014 and by the Christmas after I had been invited down to join the Central program at Bisham Abbey near Slough. This was a massive step but welcomed the opportunity. It was tough, new country, new house, new friends. I left the comfort of my life in Scotland to be part of the GB program. I started playing for Holcombe and it took a long time for me to feel settled in the GB program. Home was still very much in Scotland.

I scrapped on the fringes of the GB squad during the lead into Rio. I felt when I joined the program mid way through the cycle that the squad were really moving forward at speed and I felt like I was on catch up the whole time. Still learning new techniques, still learning about the game, still learning to live without my friends and family around and there was an experienced squad fighting to be at their peak. It was a baptism of fire. In the two years leading into Rio I didn't get a chance to take stock of where I was at and what I was doing or learning. It wasn't until the deselection for Rio and the year off from the program that I took to go back to Scotland and to finish my degree did I spend the time reflecting and thinking about what I learnt and who I wanted to be. I had been doing some online masters modules whilst in the central program which I could put towards my final degree but finishing with a 1st class bachelor of law was a huge milestone for life away from hockey.

Once I went back into the central program in 2018 I was in a much better place, I knew what I was going back to, I knew the players; I was no longer the youngster. I felt more comfortable. I did make a slight error in going back as I was sure I was going to find more balance in my hockey and life away from hockey. Find more time to socialise and more time to relax to make sure I stayed more mentally grounded. I had learnt from the previous experience but I possibly took myself too literally and it wasn't until I got a bit of shock with Paul Revington giving me a reality check of telling me I had more to give and that I wasn't reaching the potential, that I could be a real weapon on the world stage that I suddenly realised what it really required not just to be a Senior GB athlete but one that wanted to medal in the games. That insight and honesty really helped frame the player that I wanted to be and to help me see how good I was going to be when I pushed myself to 100%.

Standing on that podium in Tokyo whilst the national anthem was playing I was just incredibly proud. I was thinking of all the things I and the squad had gone through to get to that moment. It had been a hard slog especially when you added covid into the situation. For each one of us to get ourselves in peak performance for that moment had taken a lot of energy.

So what has made me an Olympian?

- Determination
- Hard Work
- Enjoying the journey



Practicing football in the garden



Sarah Robertson: Celebrating winning bronze with fellow Scot Amy Costello at the Tokyo Olympics.

SAM'S TALENT STORY

My sister and I were the first two players who signed up for the Banana Bunch - the kids section of Leicester Ladies. I was the first male to join the club! Gaynor Nash was our coach and I was playing mostly with a team of girls. At nine, we felt it was in my best interests to find a boys' team, so I moved to Beeston. We won the National Finals at U11, U13, U15 and U18. I played midfield, but scored a lot of goals. I represented Midlands through all ages, but I have to be honest, I was a "chunky kid".

I had England U16 trials, but was told I wasn't fit enough, I had quite a lot of knee pain growing up. I almost chose to stop, but continued at Beeston. At 19, I was asked to go with the team to the Euro Hockey League, invited to a few National Performance Centres and U21 trials, but it was the same story as before. I was never fit enough to play international sport. Aged 21/22, I refused to do any more sessions. I was working in a car dealership and to be honest, I was weeks away from deciding to give up playing hockey altogether in order to progress in my career.

I really enjoyed playing for Beeston and I was scoring goals – lots of them! In 2014 Andy Halliday was coaching indoor and asked me to join the squad to go and play in the A division. I scored a lot of goals there too. It was after this tournament that Bobby Crutchley, the men's GB coach at the time, asked me to come for some training with the men. I was not initially selected for the tournament in India but an injury to another player allowed me to join the squad.

Afterwards, the strength and conditioning coach and Bobby sat me in a room for a meeting and basically gave me an ultimatum - we only want the best Sam Ward that you can be - that means physically conditioned - and that I wouldn't play hockey again until I was fit enough. So for the next 12 weeks I basically ran! I thought about quitting, but I stuck in. I wanted to prove all the doubters wrong.

Since then, the only time I haven't been selected is due to an impact injury. I pride myself on being un-droppable. I know I can score goals in the nine yards and that I am great at winning the ball in pressing situations and blocking the opposition from playing. They hate playing against me. I drag flick corners at PCA and line stop at PCD. I make sure I have the skill sets that no one else can do to my level. I am brave and determined and guess I have a mentality like no other. The injuries I have sustained over the last few years with a broken wrist and now no central vision in one eye have now also pushed me to limits that I have struggled to overcome, but when people say I can't, I just have a mindset of I can and I will!

So what has made me an Olympian?

- **My family support:** in every way possible, through the lows and the highs
- **My personal determination:** I have an inner desire and strength that always drives me



We in full goalkeeper kit aged 9 playing for the Leicester Banana Bunch



Being put through my paces at Bisham Abbey in lead up to the Tokyo Olympics



Sam Ward: Celebrating scoring in the game against South Africa at the Tokyo Olympics.

LEAH'S TALENT STORY

Born into a hockey playing family, I started playing hockey aged 5. We would spend time at the local hockey club in Burton. But it wasn't only hockey I loved. I played all sports. I was 10 when my Mum thought that I should think about moving clubs to access a better level of hockey.

I moved to Belper HC and I grew quite quickly through the women's teams. I played in goal and the women that I played with were fantastic role models. When I was 13, I started to play as a striker. I used all my GK knowledge on the field. The coach was Craig Keegan (Assistant Coach to the Rio Gold Medal Winning Team) and a year later, I got into the Ladies 1st XI.

I was also playing county and regional for Midlands. My techniques improved a lot through the Midlands training as we had a coach that had high expectations for precision - Tim Barlow. That's what I put my level of highly skilled actions to now! I don't have all the razzamatazz that some of the youngsters have but I have a high level of honed passing and simple forehand ball carry. I was state school educated where hockey was not a core sport. At 16, I was approached by Repton to have a hockey scholarship, and had superb school coaching from Martin Jones (at that time a GB and England International) and club coaching. They were important years for my talent development. I was desperate to experience international hockey. Having a Welsh mother, I simply sent an email to Hockey Wales and went to a camp 2 weeks before the U18 European Cup in Prague and got selected!

Two weeks after the U18 European Cup, I was selected for the Welsh U21 team and a year later was playing for Wales Senior. I chose to go to Loughborough University for the professionalism of the sport there and I LOVED playing hockey and just wanted more and more of it!

Playing for Wales has given me some amazing experiences but it has been a challenging and expensive road. I went to multiple Commonwealth Games with Wales giving me the taste of what's next, but I thought playing for GB was a million miles off. After university I moved down to Bristol and played for Clifton, where a GB coach thought my best opportunity of selection was playing half back, a very different position. Simon Letchford invited me to Reading Hockey Club, a big step up! Playing and training alongside Kate and Helen Richardson-Walsh, Alex Danson, Chantal De Bruijn (a Dutch international), and Beth Storry this gave me the motivation to want more from hockey and the GB dream became a goal.

In 2012 I watched girls I had grown up with and played alongside winning bronze. It had me questioning the choices I had made, but I realised that this was my journey. I'm proud to play for Wales, where I have had great leadership responsibility and learned resilience, fight and grit. I wouldn't be the player I am now without it. After 2012, I was given my first opportunity to trial with GB. A week before my trial, I broke my arm. More chances came but they dwindled the more pressure I put on myself to perform.

Post Rio 2016, at 29 years old, I was given one last chance but told my age profile was not working in my favour. I was emotionally drained. So I recalculated and thought about the opportunity with Wales at the Gold Coast and completely took all pressure off myself, closing the chapter of competing for the Olympics. I played my best hockey at these games and loved every minute. I'd now got the record caps for Wales, I was captain of my country and could finally congratulate myself on my achievements. I really began to appreciate what I had done.

In 2019, Mark Hager became GB coach and the Welsh coach spoke to me about my potential involvement again – the nerves came back but I knew it was the moment. October 1, 2019, against India at Bisham, I got my GB first cap. I remember running onto the field, my family watching from the far side and me wearing a GB shirt. I knew I played well and was finally offered a full time contract. It took me so much to get here, but I'm living my dream and making the most of loving hockey. I now play a screen, different position again and having to get used to the game being 360 degrees around me is a great challenge. From there, I can drop backwards or get forwards so can utilise my strengths in both directions.

I'm a history teacher in Surrey and have taken a sabbatical, which I have had to extend as the program is going well for me.

So what has made me an Olympian?

- **Coaches:** I have had the pleasure of being coached by some of the UK's finest – Craig Keegan (Belper); Tim Barlow (Midlands); Lesley Hobley (first Senior Wales Coach); Simon Letchford (Reading); Kevin Johnson (Current Wales Senior).
- **Resilience:** I just keep going, even when it's difficult.
- **My love of hockey:** I just LOVE it. Even when it's at its most difficult, I LOVE it!



1996 Atlanta Olympic Games when i was 9 years old. We were watching the GB rowing team win gold.



Leah Wilkinson: Celebrating bronze medal with fellow teammate for Wales - Sarah Jones.

BRENDAN'S TALENT STORY

My whole family played hockey. I picked up a stick quite young and started playing at Bowdon. By 16, I was playing in the men's 1st XI. As a kid, I was heavily bullied at school and hockey became my safe place. I was quite good at most sports – I had Man United trials; I played basketball; rugby; tennis and badminton. My international hockey career started with playing for Wales when I was 14 in the Under 16, but I moved to play for England U16 when I was 15 and played two seasons. My U18 season was very frustrating as I was plagued with injury. I had spinal fractures from over-training. I developed glandular fever at the same time and had a really low point. I could continue to play sport but had to take a long break from hockey – about 18 months.

I started university in 2011 where I moved from playing midfield/forward to defender. Vicky Joel was head coach at Sheffield Hallam and she really taught me how to be part of a team. Her player management skills were fantastic. She helped form a close-knit group of guys who over-achieved because of the 'team'. At the same time, I was called back into the England U21 squad. Jon Bleby was bemused at me becoming a defender as my defending skills were not the best – he has high expectations of our 1v1 defending and that really helped me increase my expertise in this area.

After university, I made the decision to move to play in Germany at Harvestehuder. That was one of my favourite seasons. It was tough as I was travelling back once a month to train with the Seniors, but I learnt so much from the different style of hockey.

When I returned to the UK I moved to Surbiton and was awarded a full-time contract with the England Senior team. I have been at Surbiton five seasons now and feel fully integrated into the club. I coach the men's second team and love linking the youngsters that have grown through the club into the men's game and seeing them grow and develop.

In the summer of 2018, Danny Kerry became coach of the men's team. It was a long period of adjusting for me. He was honest with his feedback, which was tough to hear, but I had a lot of respect for his honesty and I was named as travelling reserve for Danny's first tournament as Head Coach.

In 2019, playing in the Euro Hockey League for Surbiton, I ruptured my ACL. My focus became getting back fit enough for the Olympic 2020 selection. When we heard the Games had been delayed, I knew having longer to recover would help. I needed a break at this point and took a month to refocus brain and body. I knew coming back I would be stronger than I had ever been and I have great confidence in my body again.

Alongside my hockey career, I am currently studying an Open University degree in Psychology. Katie Warriner and Tim Pit, the sports psychs for the men's Senior team, have really allowed me to express myself. They are a big reason why I chose to continue my study in this field.

So what has made me an Olympian?

- Passion
- Growth Mindset
- Perseverance

These #talentstories illustrate the different journeys these amazing athletes have taken to play international hockey. Every single player that has pulled on a GB or Home Nation shirt for an official cap has a different 'talent journey'. The choices they have made throughout their journey have influenced their experiences.



Playing for England in the under 16 team in the home nations tournament 12 years ago in 2009



Brendan Creed: In action at the Tokyo Olympics



SECTION 3

THE TALENT SYSTEM

The Talent System is where many of our best juniors develop Complete Player Qualities that allow them to reach their potential for lifelong involvement in hockey, and also increases the breadth and depth of hockey players to support future performance aspirations.

The future Talent System has an aspiration to create:

A phenomenal generation of players which fans, hockey players and the nation are proud of.

Exceptional talent development environments which breed competition for places at every level, leading to a vibrant elite game across Great Britain, a strong domestic game excelling in European Club Hockey, role models inspiring through consistent international success and lifelong participation in hockey.

A player identification and development system which attracts and excites young people and inspires them to be the best they can be, which values both current performance and future potential.

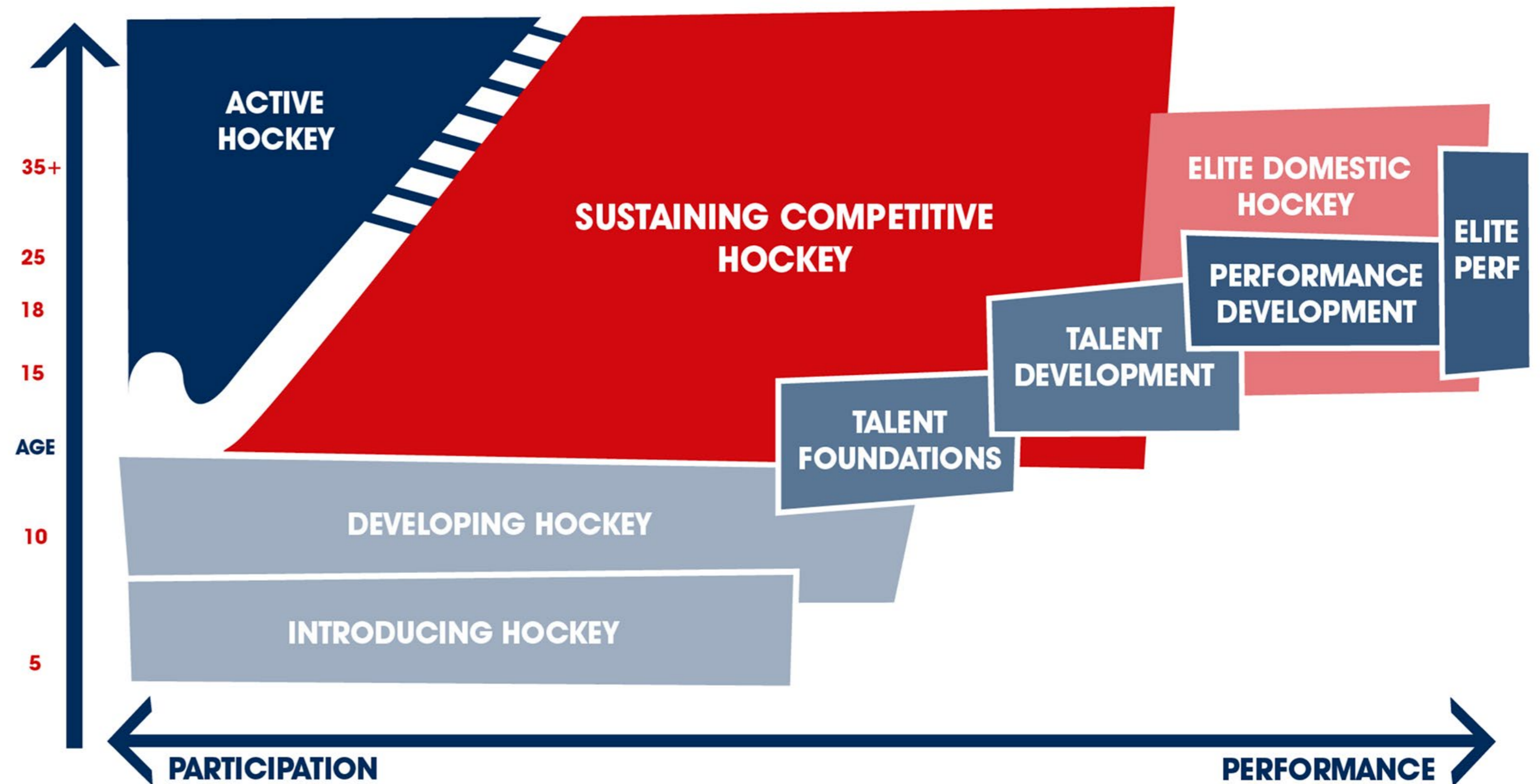
Safe, enjoyable and inclusive talent development environments with a duty of care for everyone.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Putting the player at the heart of the sport

The Player Development Model has been established to represent the hockey landscape and the hockey playing population into nine segments that position the player at the heart of hockey.

It shows how people enter, develop within and through, and interact with the sport, based on the needs and motivations of players. The emphasis is on providing great experiences and exceptional environments for players to be successful and stay in the sport.

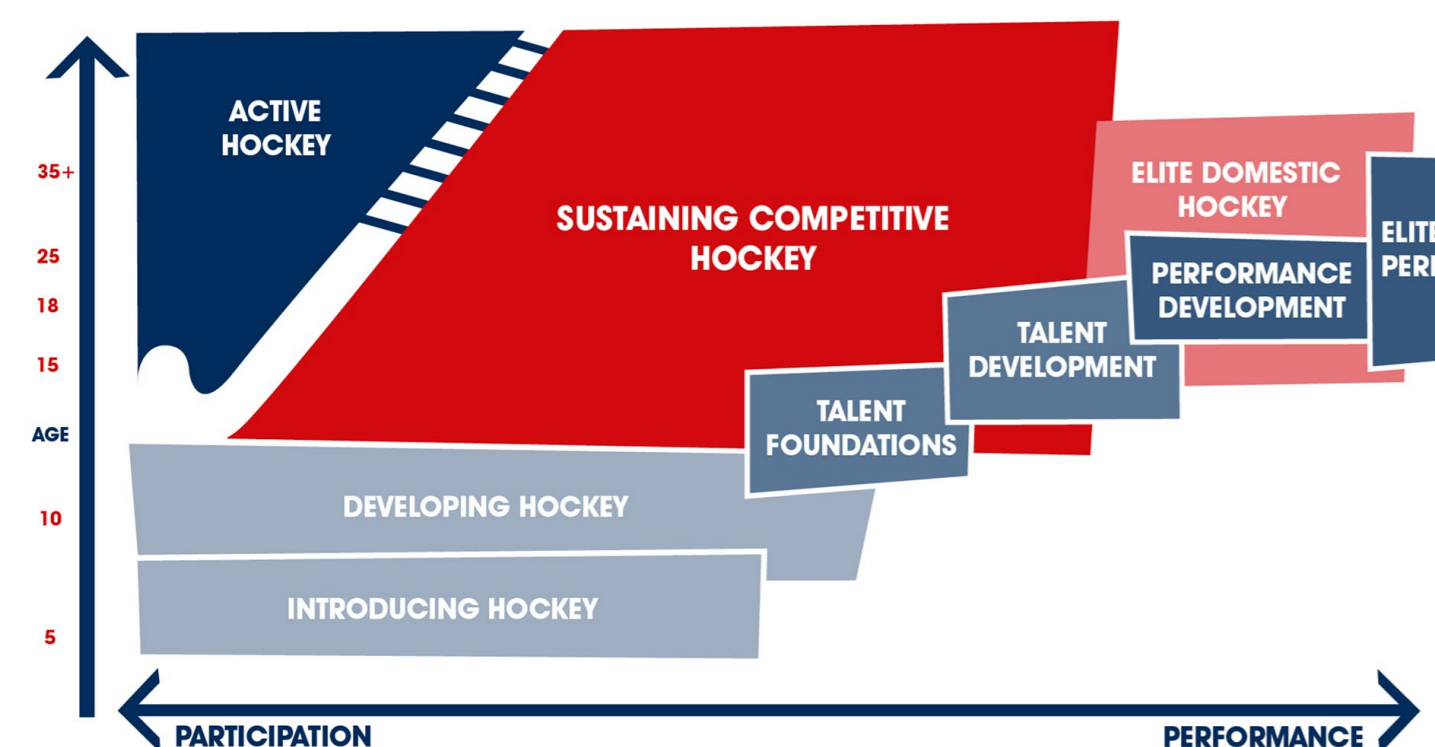


The model recognises that players enter the sport at different stages and the ages are a guide only. They develop at different rates and have different needs. It positions the ideal experiences and environments across the nine segments that will support individual player's needs.

Some hockey clubs cater for all levels, ages and interests from 8-80 years equally while others focus more on particular participant segments.

Defining the ideal experiences and environments for each of the nine segments allows us to ask ourselves how we can, collectively, best support a player's experience and development both on and off the pitch.

Whether you are a club, school, parent, coach, umpire or the National Governing Body, the Player Development Model provides clarity on the why, how and what for player development and supports greater connectivity across the sport.



➔ INTRODUCTION TO HOCKEY

A fun introduction to hockey that develops a broad range of qualities in a playful context that allows children to enjoy their first experiences of the sport.

➔ DEVELOPING HOCKEY

Fun and inspiring environments that further develop a young person's qualities and play an important part in contributing to sustaining hockey or developing talent in later years.

➔ SUSTAINING COMPETITIVE HOCKEY

Maintaining and refining player qualities that allow them to play 'competitive' hockey and access the wider benefits of the game (social, fitness, etc) for lifelong participation.

➔ ACTIVE HOCKEY

Fun, social and informal environments that allow players to pick up a stick in a way that suits their lifestyle.

➔ TALENT FOUNDATION

A fun, developmental and positive environment where players realise that they are good at hockey, love playing, and want to play as much as they can. May be involved in other sporting activities.

➔ TALENT DEVELOPMENT

A challenging and supportive environment where players know they are good at hockey and are determined to get better. Focused on connecting with performance and taking responsibility.

➔ PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

An environment that keeps the potential international athlete of the future in mind, with the aim of providing high quality experiences and satisfaction through accomplishment. At this level, players will have a clear line of sight to senior international hockey, through U21 and other age group competitions, and potential early exposure to senior international hockey itself.

➔ ELITE DOMESTIC HOCKEY

An environment that drives regular and challenging competition that delivers sustained performance on a domestic and European club stage. This environment could develop players for the talent and performance development and elite performance and support those players exiting those environments, who still love to challenge themselves.

➔ ELITE PERFORMANCE

Engaged in and committed to high level senior international hockey. There is a culture of continuous improvement and creativity, with a clear goal of delivering peak performance in significant tournaments and matches on the world stage.

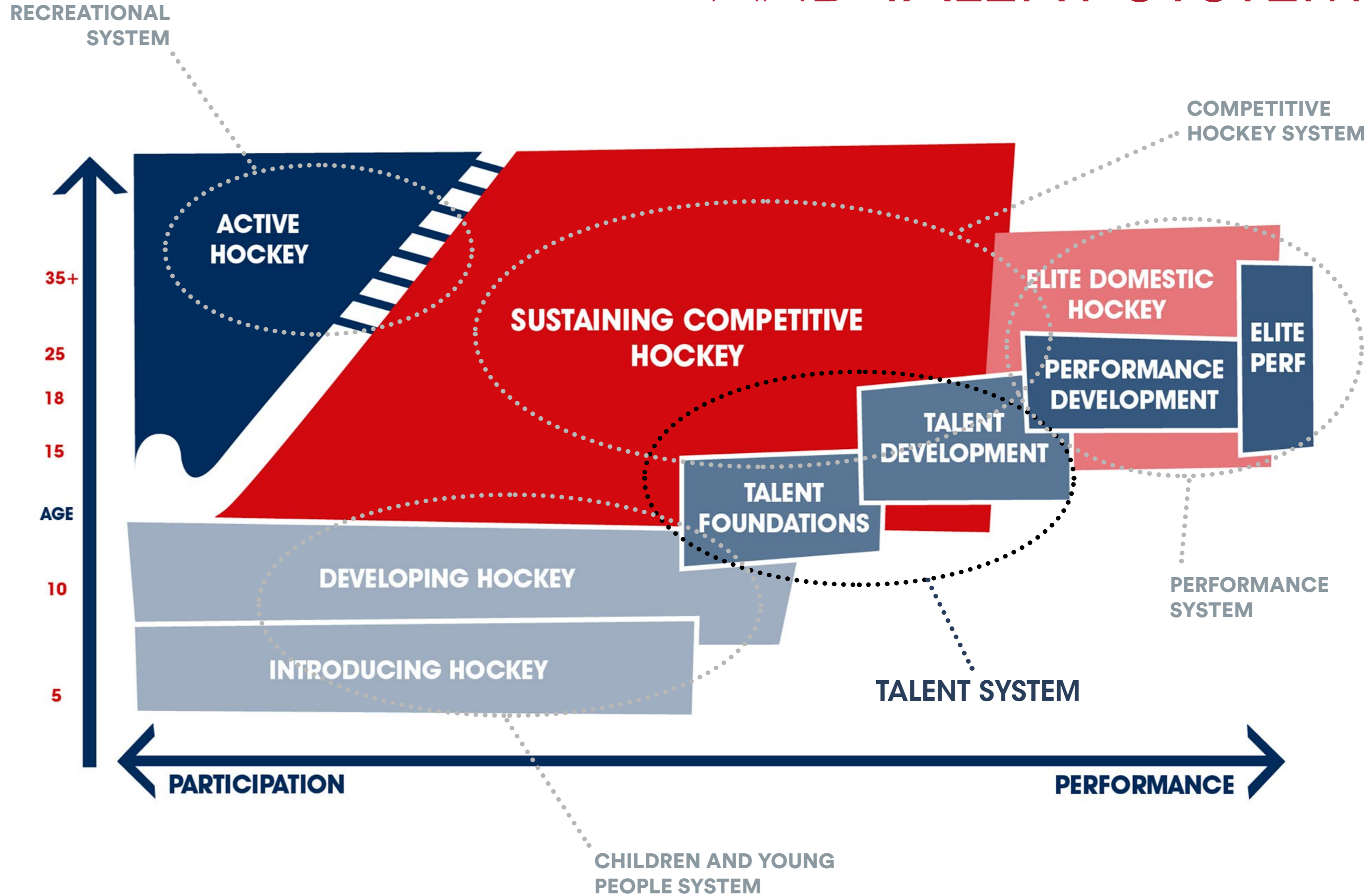
PLAYER DEVELOPMENT MODEL AND TALENT SYSTEM

We have identified five different hockey systems within the overall hockey landscape and these systems identify how people can come into, stay in, get better at and succeed in hockey.

The Talent System is just one of the systems that make up the hockey landscape. Other systems that make up the Hockey Landscape are the Children and Young People System, Recreational System, Competitive Hockey System and Performance System.

The Talent System comprises two segments of the Player Development Model, 'Talent Foundations' and 'Talent Development', and is where young players with potential are developed and supported.

To help define the ideal experiences and environment for the different systems we have developed a player experience model...



PLAYER EXPERIENCE MODEL

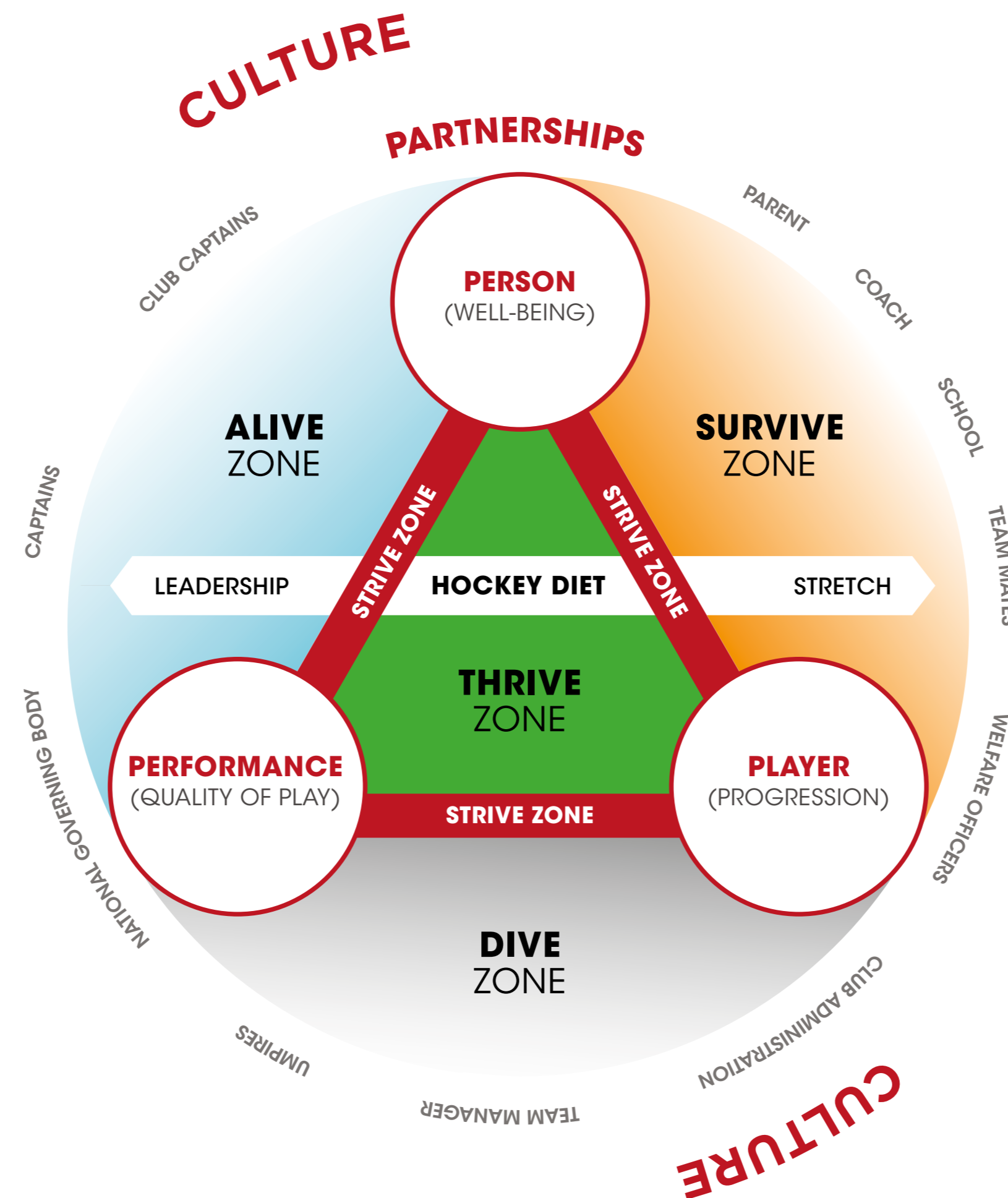
A priority for the Talent System is to keep the player at the centre. To help our thought processes and decision making, we have developed the PLAYER EXPERIENCE MODEL. This model can be used alongside the RARE principles to help a player; parent; coach thinking about a player thriving and what might the best option be regarding environment to best progress.

The centre of the model is the ideal experience, 'where a player is thriving' in their environment - the **THRIVE ZONE**.

There are three key factors that we feel are critical in supporting a player to thrive. (1) the **PLAYER** - how well are they progressing? (2) the **PERFORMANCE** - are they playing well? (3) the **PERSON** - how are they/how is their general well-being? If all are nicely balanced, the player will be thriving!

If one of these elements is significantly out of balance, then a player is likely to shift into one of the other experience zones. It is normal (and sometimes very helpful for short periods) for a player to move between these zones. However, a repetitive / extended period outside of the **THRIVE ZONE** is likely to hinder a player.

There are many **PARTNERSHIPS** which influence and impact the players weekly experiences and long-term journey. Recognising and understanding these partnerships and having a holistic view of the player can be invaluable in supporting a player and their movement between zones might help move them back.



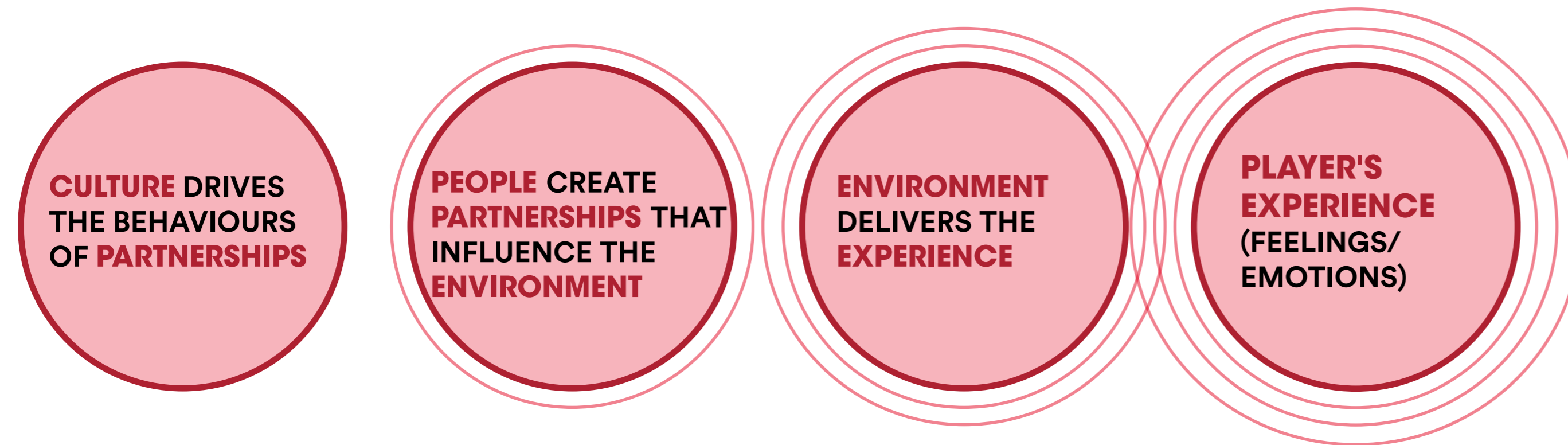
The **STRIVE ZONES** are the limits of the **THRIVE ZONE**, where players may find themselves at different times, and it is down to them and the various **PARTNERSHIPS** involved in their hockey experience to help them move back into the **THRIVE ZONE**.

This model allows players, parents, clubs, teams and our NGB to engage in discussions about where a player "is". Then, through good conversations, explore the best way of supporting a player to a **THRIVING EXPERIENCE**. With competing demands across schools, clubs and international hockey, it can be tricky, but there is a huge opportunity for all of us.

There may be points where a player is no longer progressing and they shift to the **ALIVE ZONE**. This could be linked to a lack of stretch in the training / competition environment. Or, there could be points where a player shifts to the **DIVE ZONE** - perhaps where well-being is being compromised (with an overload of hockey, too big a transition, a difficult psycho-social context, or a stretch point being too far). If performance is faltering, players may be in the **SURVIVE ZONE**. This may link to the environment being too much of a stretch (too much of the time) and a regression in performance.

If everything is working well, there will be environments that allow players to thrive and provide the player with the ideal experience for them. That said, knowing that talent is messy and complex, there will always be times in the player's journey where something is not quite right with either their performance, their progression or their wellbeing. The role of the system is to recognise this and to work together to support and develop the player.

HEALTHY TALENT DEVELOPMENT CULTURE



Culture is created (or changed) by the combination of values, beliefs and behaviours of people, and the systems, processes, language and symbols which exist.

Creating the right environment for a healthy talent development culture, both on and off the pitch is a complex task.

A number of factors will contribute to the creation of this healthy culture and will be driven by the way we do things and the way we behave in relation to common beliefs and goals.

THE FOUR P's

PERSON

Every person matters.
What is best for this player's wellbeing?

Every player is first and foremost a young person: the health, safety, wellbeing and long-term development of every young person matters.

We have a duty of care to everyone who interacts with the talent system. Well-being takes into consideration - the mental; physical; emotional and social well-being of a player.

PLAYER

Player-centered decision making.
What is best for this player?

A recognition that while there are multiple stakeholders involved in the talent system (with many different personal, organisational, wants and needs), our fundamental purpose is to provide the best possible experiences for players to realise their potential.

PERFORMANCE

Performance matters; it's more than just about the taking part.
What will help this player perform?

A healthy talent culture values performance and excellence. It encourages and drives high standards of behaviour on and off the pitch. Players require physical and mental stretch, challenge and support to progress. They need to experience setbacks and be uncomfortable at times, and they need opportunities to experiment, innovate and have fun. All this will be present in a high functioning performance orientated talent environment.

PARTNERSHIP

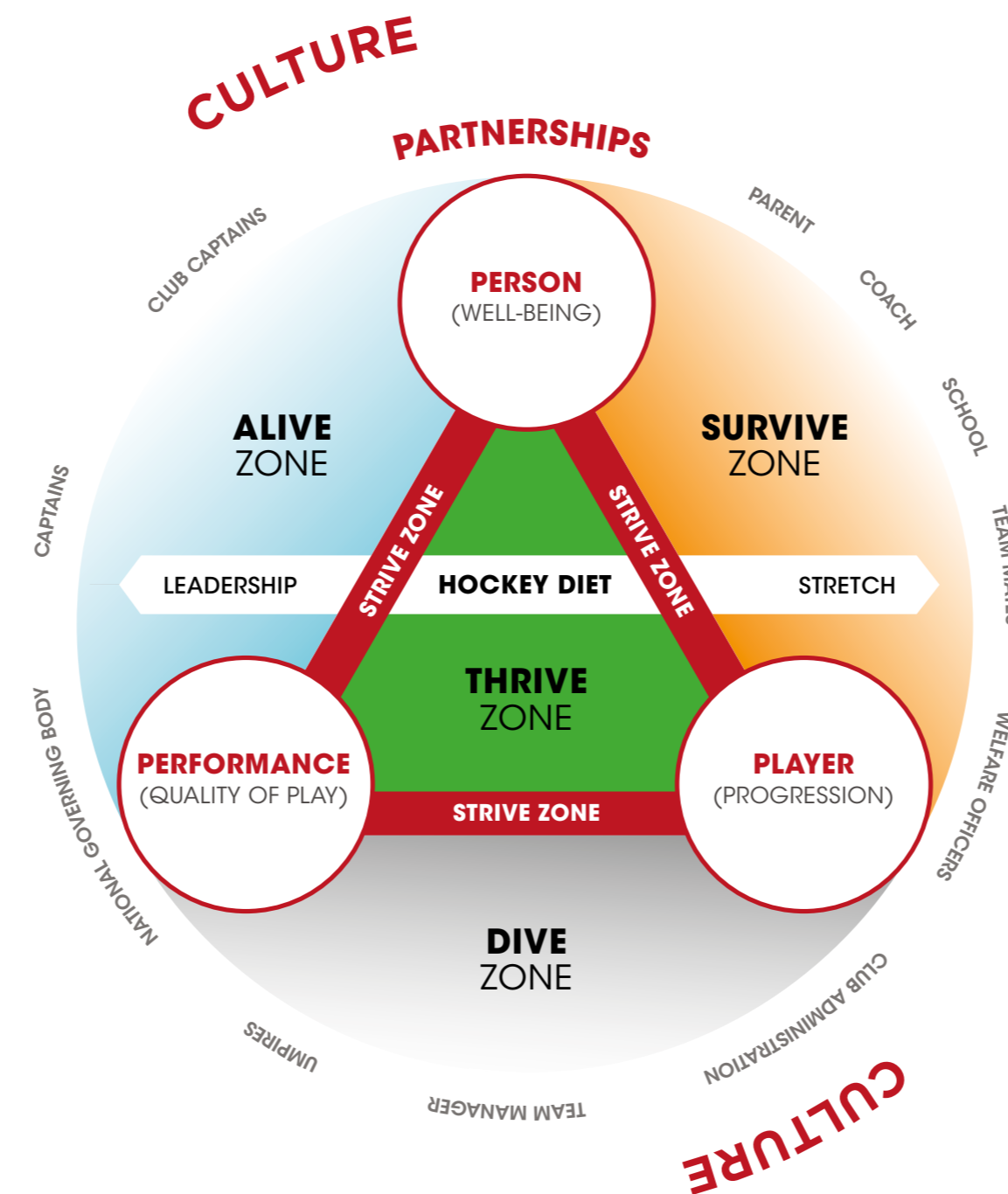
Partnership working.
How are we working together for the good of this player?

A recognition that working together and maximising our collective expertise and strength will create a stronger and more fulfilling talent system for all. Junior hockey is run by adults for children. Competitiveness and ambition by young players need to be supported by our collaboration off the field. We need to provide a person first, player centred, performance focussed and collaborative system for all.

THE HOCKEY DIET

Throughout a player's talent journey we expect them to access a varied hockey diet. This hockey diet will provide different learning experiences.

These can be seen on the player experience model as extremes on the left being **Leadership Hockey** and the right being **Stretch Hockey**.



LEADERSHIP HOCKEY

is an environment that the player excels within.

They will have to take responsibility to lead others in the team. They are playing with and against players that are similar in level and others that are less developed. Challenges are likely to be ones they recognise and have developed a tool box to deal with them. e.g school hockey

STRETCH HOCKEY

is an environment that challenges players to perform at a higher level than their current playing ability. The following may be worth considering:

- Playing with and against players that are higher performing than them
- Having some sessions where the 'failure rate' is purposefully higher
- Manipulating time, space and speed of sessions to increase the stretch
- Providing new problems, where players have to find the solutions
- Highlighting areas of potential improvement (and matching this with support)

Sitting outside of the formal organised hockey diet is:

UNSTRUCTURED PRACTICE

This is an opportunity like 'backyard hockey'. An individual or group of players will get together to 'play' or train, with no coach involved. It will be self-directed, with just their own imagination, self analysis and peer-to-peer coaching to help progress. e.g. playing in your garden with your siblings/parents

IDEAL EXPERIENCES

TALENT FOUNDATIONS

I realise I am good at hockey.
I love playing and I want to play as much as I can.

ENVIRONMENT

PERSON Having fun/enjoys social interaction and engagement with others.

PLAYER Mistakes can be seen as helpful and a consequence of exploration and learning. Player can be involved in a number of other sports as we recognise the benefits of these other sports in developing player qualities for hockey.

PERFORMANCE Emphasis is on development rather than performance.

PARTNERSHIPS

Parents; captains (at senior club hockey); teammates; club welfare officer and junior coaches are all important stakeholders at this level.

INTERACTION WITH HOCKEY

Balance weighted toward 'leadership' over 'stretch' hockey.

LEADERSHIP HOCKEY

- Take the role of leader.
- Improve superfocus (main areas of their game that needs development).
- Consistently show off their superstrength.
- Continue to meet high expectations set around highly skilled actions and decision making.
- Develop positive behaviours towards teammates.
- Help others play better and enjoy being respectful amongst peers.

STRETCH HOCKEY

- Stretch hockey for players within this talent foundation segment can be overwhelming.
- Offered as a learning experience to learn and grow from role models around them.
- Players encouraged to play to their superstrengths (if identified) and keep the game simple.
- Superstrength at this level may not be so obvious, but it should not put them, or their coach, off from trying.
- Encouraged to learn from their mistakes.
- Players around them should be positive about mistakes and help the player to learn.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

I know I am good at hockey.
I'm determined to get better.

ENVIRONMENT

PERSON Greater understanding of self both within hockey and outside of hockey.

PLAYER Starts to self-analyse and begin to set goals and plan and plot their own progress.

PERFORMANCE Starts to thrive under challenging conditions. Enjoys tougher competition and stretch, as well as recognising the need for quality recovery methods.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Aware of their greater independence and all partnerships start to help give tools for greater independence.
- Allow players to start making their own decisions and encourage learning from mistakes made.
- Need to encourage relevant rest periods and help the player identify these moments.
- Key partnerships - coaches (maybe across school; talent academy; club and possibly national) and parents.

INTERACTION WITH HOCKEY

More 'stretch' than 'leadership' hockey and unstructured practice plays an important role.

LEADERSHIP HOCKEY

- Should not be their only diet of hockey at this level.
- Over-emphasis on this level means that when they are put in a stretch environment the unfortunate perceived drop in level puts them off continuing elite level sport.
- Players need to remain respectful in this environment and encouraged to support teammates in their progression.

STRETCH HOCKEY

- Motivated to improve and enjoy the challenge.
- Challenged but supported.
- Able to demonstrate their superstrength and be comfortable using it consistently.
- May not be in a position to play their 'normal' game but getting used to the speed of the game and making better decisions under pressure..

UNSTRUCTURED PRACTICE

- They start to practise elements of the game they want to improve and have the curiosity and ability to self-analyse and coach themselves.

SECTION 4 COMPLETE PLAYER QUALITIES

In developing a greater breadth and depth of hockey players, work on the 'End in Mind' has evolved.

We have moved away from the 'End in Mind' terminology as we want our young players to think when they have entered the Performance System that their talent development is a constant journey.

The aim of Great Britain Hockey is to inspire people through our behaviours, culture and performance on the pitch.

We aspire for the men and women to excel and consistently deliver world-level medal winning performances.



But what does it take for individuals to be part of these successful squads?

GREAT BRITAIN PLAYER QUALITIES

On consulting with numerous elite coaches (Senior Team Coaches, Elite Development Programme coaches and England Age Group Coaches) and past and present players (female and male, including many of the Rio and Seoul Olympic Gold Medallists) a consensus of **THE COMPLETE PLAYER** and what it takes to be a future Great British Hockey Squad member has been collated. The Complete Player qualities are made up of the Great Britain Player Qualities; the 5 main components of an international hockey player and superstrengths/superfocus areas of a player. [Here is an explanation of each of the GB Player Qualities.](#)

#pursuitofexcellence

A recognition and motivational drive to consistently be better. The vision for future GB squads is of players, coaches and support staff who are relentless in their courage and determination to not only win, but all pursue and be the best version of themselves as often as possible. Those that excel, know that there is no ceiling for their development, and they know that in bringing the best version of themselves, they will be taking the game to new levels. The talent system, therefore, has the task of supporting athletes to understand and apply this 'pursuit of excellence'.

We must not forget that players in the system can be young though. We are not suggesting that, at 13 years of age, players should apply this pursuit, have robust mental skills or consistently act with relentless energy - far from it. We know that many players will be in their early / mid twenties as aspects of their maturation embeds. With young players, our opportunity is to embed performance based values and behaviours that set young people up well for subsequent steps.

Otherwise we will see players burn out too young to reach their full potential.

#relentlessspirit

Relentless Spirit is a way of behaving on and off the field of play - it shows with an attitude of constant grit and determination. It is a typical "British Bulldog" spirit.

On the pitch this requires running into position, tackle back, leading at a sprint. To play internationally requires physical capabilities to play high intensity for short periods, so the level of quality and speed of the game can be maintained.

Off the pitch this requires diligence in everything that makes an international hockey player – video work; nutrition; hydration etc. and the repetitive nature of pursuing excellence. Having relentless spirit keeps you motivated to progress and perform.

#embracediversity

The recognition of the diversity of the player qualities of Great British Hockey athletes can not be underestimated. This is critical in our vision of 'Pursuit of excellence'. We recognise that our best GB teams have been forged from efficiently and effectively utilising the best assets of all individuals to make the best for the team.

Developing a full range of superstrengths through our talent system, so that all know how to effectively and consistently deliver on that superstrength, is important. Superstrengths can be developed from any of the five 'Complete Player' qualities that make up any elite hockey player:

GAME UNDERSTANDING | **HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS** | **PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES** **MENTAL SKILLS** | **TEAMSHIP SKILLS**

Having a range of superstrengths within the team allows for mitigation of the weaknesses of teammates. There will always be a fine balance between these five qualities and the superstrength/s to warrant selection for Great Britain and Home Nation teams.

We recognise that no two players will be the same and that diversity will be the strength of our success. We all know that every GB Senior Athlete has a different mix of qualities. Some have great game understanding; some have more speed; some have a great passing range; others are great eliminators. Each individual is unique. The beauty of the future GB qualities is identifying the unique blend of each individual. It therefore helps to identify key areas of strengths – what we will term superstrengths and key areas of limitations – what we have termed superfocus.

Identifying these areas is critical to the development of players. These will and should adapt over time. The skill is for the player and coach to identify the areas for the superstrength and superfocus that will take their game to the next level. Not only is the skill in identifying the areas to put most energy, but it's how they are then developed with the player.

#supportandchallenge

The need to create a supportive and challenging environment player-to- player; coach-to-player and player- to-coach has also been highlighted as key to producing world class GB athletes.

A term currently used is psychological safety, an environment that feels safe, inclusive and allows confidence in speaking up and being heard to challenge or support.

This really helps move learning and development forward. This is specifically designed to encourage players to have their voice (in the correct manner at the correct time) and for coaches/ captains/teammates to recognise and allow for these moments for the positive learning experience of all.

COMPLETE PLAYER QUALITIES

GAME UNDERSTANDING

The decision-making capability to use the highly skilled actions and the teams tactics at the right time in the right context to allow the team to achieve their objective at any one moment during the game of hockey.

HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS

Detailed level of ability to perform the actions necessary during the game of hockey.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

The ability to compete in terms of physical capacity. Including all physical facets of the game of hockey that enable a player to perform optimally - Strength; Endurance; Speed; Nutrition & Hydration.

MENTAL SKILLS

The skills required to mentally support; motivate and challenge an individual in their quest to pursue excellence.

TEAMSHIP SKILLS

The level of skills required to be a strong team member.



SARAH ROBERTSON



GAME UNDERSTANDING

My experience of ball sports; I have over 150 caps now for my country and GB combined. I like to have a plan and execute on it. In Tokyo 2020 I had more leadership responsibility and I thrive in that environment.

HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS

I consistently work hard on the basics of the game. I knew I was playing catch up in this area so I have spent a long time over the past 10-11 years on this area of my game. I hate not being able to do something so I just try, try, try again until I can and then keep on perfecting it.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

I am very physical capable but it took a while to there. I really had to put in the work. Its not always been easy but hard work pays off physically!

MENTAL SKILLS

I am a resilient character. Took time to find my feet In the GB programme initially during the 2016 cycle but on reflection it was character building. I am very good at reflecting and learning from mistakes.

TEAMSHIP

It has taken me a long time to find my role within the GB program. The last 18 months I have embraced more of a leadership role especially amongst the forward line. I am very good at finding the balance between relaxing and having fun off the field and then being able to focus and be ready on the field.

SUPERSTRENGTHS

Backhand shot – powerful; accurate and quick to get the shot away.
Burst of pace – acceleration away from opposition – change of pace.

LEAH WILKINSON



GAME UNDERSTANDING

Game Understanding – From a youngster as a GK I loved to understand the game and would take all information for the team on board. This continued went I moved position to a field player. This grew into becoming a ‘hockey geek!’. As the game gets harder the margins become smaller so understanding the small details has a difference at this level.

HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS

I don't have all the elimination, 3D or reverse skills of some of the youngsters but my level of basic technique of forehand range of passing and ball carry is a very high level.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

Jack of all trades master of none. Very good for a 34 year old!

MENTAL SKILLS

Resilience is high but I have had to work hard at that and I still now struggle to not put pressure on myself. I used to think about how I wasn't good enough to get in, now im in I constantly think should I be in! Emotionally draining at times and finally realising that I am good enough!

TEAMSHIP

Experience helps; I can read the room now; I understand what teammates need/want and I can fit and change my role dependent on the team.

SUPERSTRENGTHS

Variation and quality of passing; Highly skilled actions of key elements; communication and leadership to control the game; brave and win ball im hard nosed and I train as a I play so I up the level of training for everyone around me.

SAM WARD



GAME UNDERSTANDING

Something that I have been working incredibly hard on and have moved in the past couple of seasons from a 2/3 to a 4.

HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS

I know I am not the most gifted hockey player; not the most skilful.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

The quality that I have improved the most from 16 when I would have scored myself 1 to now a 4.

MENTAL SKILLS

Strongest area of my game; bravery and determination are like no other.

TEAMSHIP

An area that I have improved with experience but I have still got room to improve.

SUPERSTRENGTHS

- 1) Goal scoring in the 9 yards, brave, mind set;
- 2) Ball winner as a striker – pressing ability brave to get low left hand and block opponents.
- 3) Drag flick PCA
- 4) Line stop PCD. Plus I train as I play so I take training always to another level! I make myself undroppable.

BRENDAN CREED



GAME UNDERSTANDING

Accelerator of the game through speed of decision making and pace on a pass; Optimist in my play making so sometimes high risk vs high reward but learnt to be more calculated and trust in my highly skilled actions to deliver a hard break line pass.

HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS

Technically one of the most gifted. All those hours spent as a kid on the turf at Bowdon by myself. I pride myself on the hours I have put into being able to deliver.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

So many injuries. I have recovered relatively quickly through hard graft. If I look at all my physical capabilities I am not incredible at any specific one just average in all.

MENTAL SKILLS

I am really not great at looking after myself I will tend to put everybody else ahead of me sometimes to the detriment of myself. I am very driven and pursuing excellence genuinely excited me. I am a perfectionist and I sometimes struggled with this growing up never meeting my own expectations but have learnt to take all the lessons of “failing” and see them now as positives to improve.

TEAMSHIP

I would say I am an emotional leader. I think I can gauge others emotions but I also know that whilst I can positively influence others I can also negatively influence if I am in a bad place. That is something that I am learning to deal with.

SUPERSTRENGTHS

Xray vision – pride myself with ability to see and deliver passes in all ranges, but also my ability to read the game I rarely get caught out of position; Energizer – I live and breathe the team I give a lot of energy to the team; Curiosity – I ask questions others wont. I love learning about the game and I like doing things differently.

PROFILING

Using the Complete Player Qualities for Profiling

Complete Player Qualities have multiple purposes. They can be used as a way to understand where a player is and what areas they should be spending more energy on developing.

The other purpose is to help identify players with potential whether that be as coaches or as scouts. The diagram shows how the player qualities will be used to provide insights to aid completion of a player profile, which will determine a players Individual Development Plans and selection.



Hockey IQ is about using your awareness of what's going on (**GAME UNDERSTANDING**) to make good decisions. In understanding the game, a player can adopt **HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS** to impact that moment or phase of the game.



Having a high Hockey IQ allows you to be adaptable. Having the speed of awareness and decision-making to change, alter and adapt is critical to each moment that arrives. You may pre-scan and have taken in the information before receiving a pass, but as you receive, the game changes in front of you, so adapting to this new situation has a big impact for your team.





GAME UNDERSTANDING

AWARENESS

PRINCIPLES & PHASES

STRUCTURE

TACTICS

GAME CONTEXT

Hockey is a multi-directional, multi-faceted game that requires **AWARENESS** of many different aspects. All of this has to be processed (often unconsciously) to enable appropriate action. The picture is constantly changing and as such, decisions have to be made, changed and continually assessed and reassessed.

The different aspects to be **AWARE**:

- PRINCIPLES AND PHASES OF THE GAME
- STRUCTURE
- TACTICS
- GAME CONTEXT

These four aspects of **AWARENESS** will all influence the decision to act and are all classified under **GAME UNDERSTANDING**

DECISION



Game Understanding is important for both field players and goalkeepers

A goalkeeper is not always close to the action, but it is important that they immerse themselves in all aspects of game understanding. Out of possession is more obvious as this will ultimately lead to their action. But, they can learn about, influence and impact aspects of in-possession. With good awareness and game intellect, they can be the eyes and ears for their team.

It is important that GK and field players alike have time to work together to encourage communication and collaboration in problem-solving in regards to their game understanding.





PRINCIPLES AND PHASES

IN POSSESSION

In possession is any moment within the game when our team have possession of the ball.

Main Principle

The best option to go forward and score.

Keep Phase

Opposition have the advantage. We must retain possession of the ball

Create Phase

Neutral position important to find the best way to go forward

Attack Phase

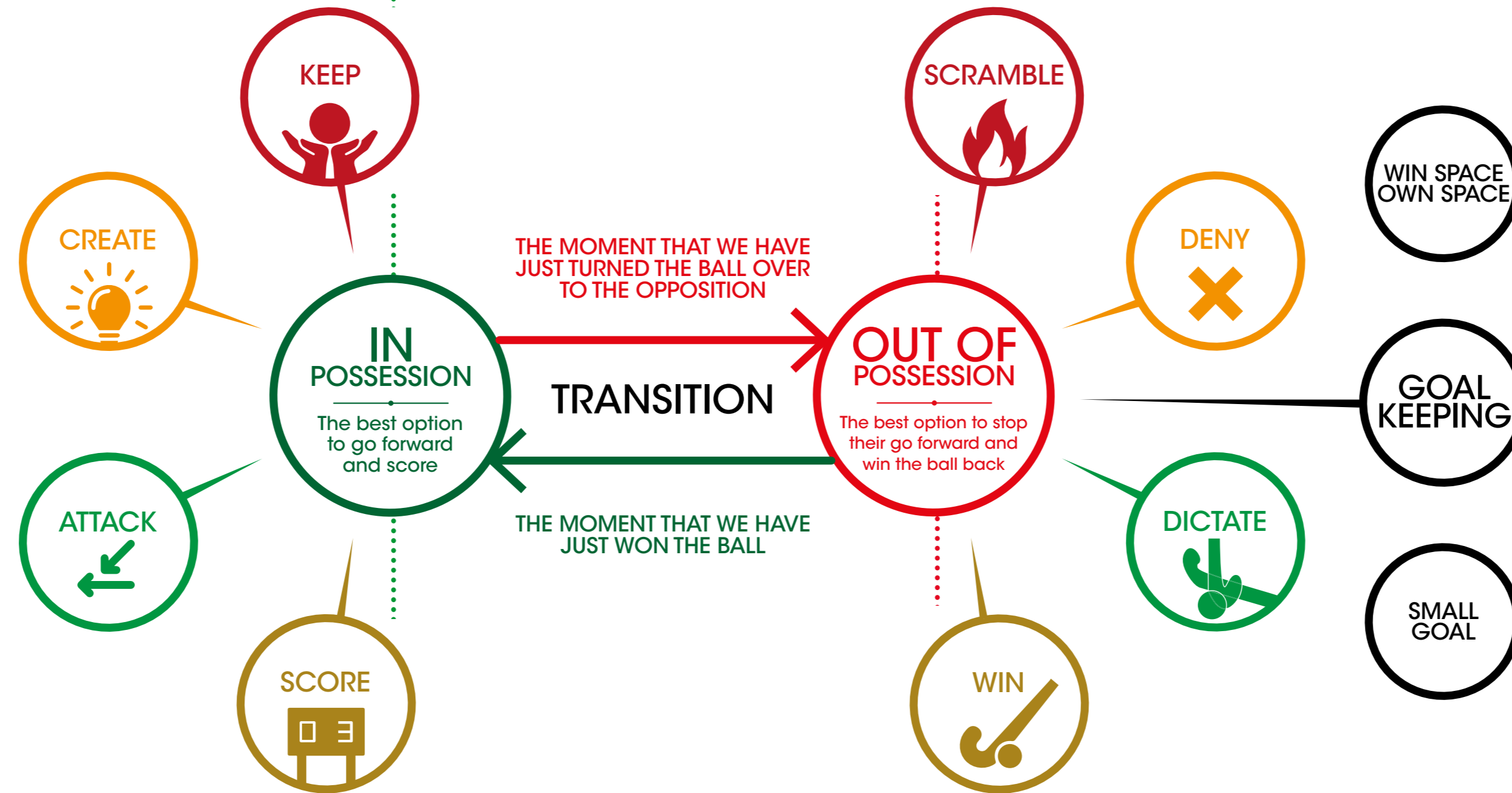
We have the advantage to go forward at speed

Score Phase

We are inside the circle. Our intention is to get an outcome (PCA; shot on target; rebound or goal).

Transition Out of Possession

The moment that we have lost possession to the opposition – we should also have principles that anticipate losing the ball. So during our attack or score phase, there are some members of the team planning and thinking about ‘what if – we lose the ball’ commonly known as “counter control”.



(The traffic light system red, amber, green with an addition of gold is there to assist in the brain linking decision making moments. Red being a really tricky situation; amber being a warning or a get ready; green being a moment to capitalise on the advantage and gold being the key moments to go in our favour.)

OUT OF POSSESSION

Out of possession is any moment within the game when the opposition have possession of the ball.

Main Principle

The best option to stop their go forward and win the ball back

Scramble Phase

Opposition have the advantage to go forward. Our intent is to limit their opportunity to go forward at speed

Deny Phase

Stop their go forward by denying time and space

Dictate Phase

Force the opposition into an advantageous position for us

Win Phase

We have created an opportunity to WIN the ball back.

Transition into Possession

The moment that we have won possession from the opposition – we should also have principles that anticipate us winning the ball. During a ‘win it’ phase, we could organise some members of our team to already start moving into positions that help us attack with pace ‘what if – we win the ball?’

Due to the specific nature of goal-keeping there are two principles of game understanding that they would need to consider specific to their positioning:

‘Win space’-‘Own space’ principle – the way that we as GKs maintain control of the space between GK and striker.

Small Goal Principle – the way that a GK can control their depth and angles with their defenders and stance to reduce the size of the goal that a striker has to shoot at.



STRUCTURE

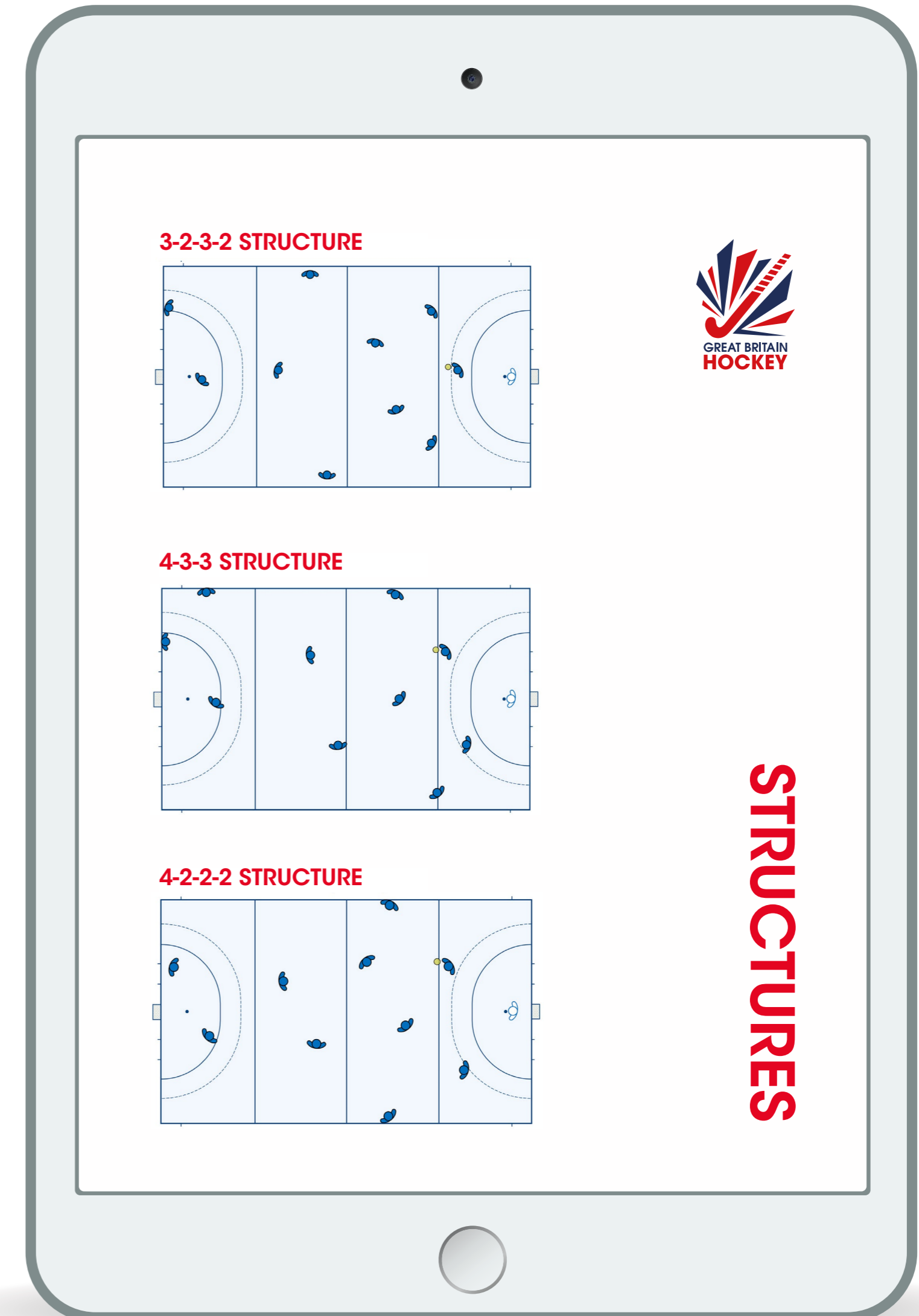
The structure of a team is the shape we want to create in order to utilise the strengths of our team. This could be 3-2-3-2 or 4-3-3 or 4-2-2-2 there are many different structures that could be identified but the important question is...

why?

- Why is this shape good for this team and does the shape need to change in possession to out of possession and if so how are you going to change shape. Which positions will alter?
- What are your team and individual strengths? Does your structure in possession and out of possession optimise the use of these strengths?
- If your team understand the basic structure can you establish dynamic connected movement amongst your players to constantly replace the same structure?
- Does your team understand the benefit of a different structure?
- Can they change shape and understand what the different shape brings to the team? And how it might impact the opposition?



There is further information and supporting videos on the *HOCKEY HUB* about different structures and how and why you might choose one structure over another





TACTICS

Tactics are carefully planned strategies to achieve a desired outcome.

Where on the field are we trying to win the ball when the opposition have an outlet?

How might we be looking to change and adapt our structure to play against a specific opposition to mitigate their strengths or capitalise on their weaknesses?

Tactics can be pre-planned or can be altered mid-game. They are often coach-driven, although giving players ability to problem solve on the field can be really beneficial to a team's outcome. One of the most simple tactics to implement, and important to understand, are the pros and cons of playing and playing against: **Man 2 Man** or **Zonal**

There is a section on Hockey Hub that looks into out-of-possession play - playing a Man 2 Man and a Zonal defence and in possession play playing against a Man 2 Man or a Zonal defence and how that may change your tactics.

IN POSSESSION

- Shape change from deep outlet
- High Line High Transfer shape change
- Circle Free Hits and Long Corners – set moves
- Playing against Zonal or Man 2 Man
- Opposition have specific strengths out of possession (individuals or team)

OUT OF POSSESSION

- Man 2 Man or Zonal defence
- Pressing trap – where do we want to dictate the play?
- Pressing shape – structure
- Deep defence decisions
- Opposition have specific strengths in possession (individuals or team)



GAME CONTEXT

In any one moment of a game a different context can be playing out.

For example a player playing as a forward with 1 minute left on the clock winning 1-0 may decide to take the ball towards the attacking right corner to keep possession to ensure their team a win. With 1 minute to go but losing 1-0, they may decide to take on the 1v1 along the baseline to make a circle entry. The context of the game has adapted their decision making on the field.

Different contexts that might occur during a game/tournament of hockey:

- How long left on the clock
- Score
- Location on field
- Strength of opponent
- Location within the circle
- Number of players on the field
- Importance of match (i.e. is it developmental or must-win)

Of course, there could be a number of these contexts playing out at the same time e.g. you are 1-0 up with 3 minutes to go, with a player in the sin bin.

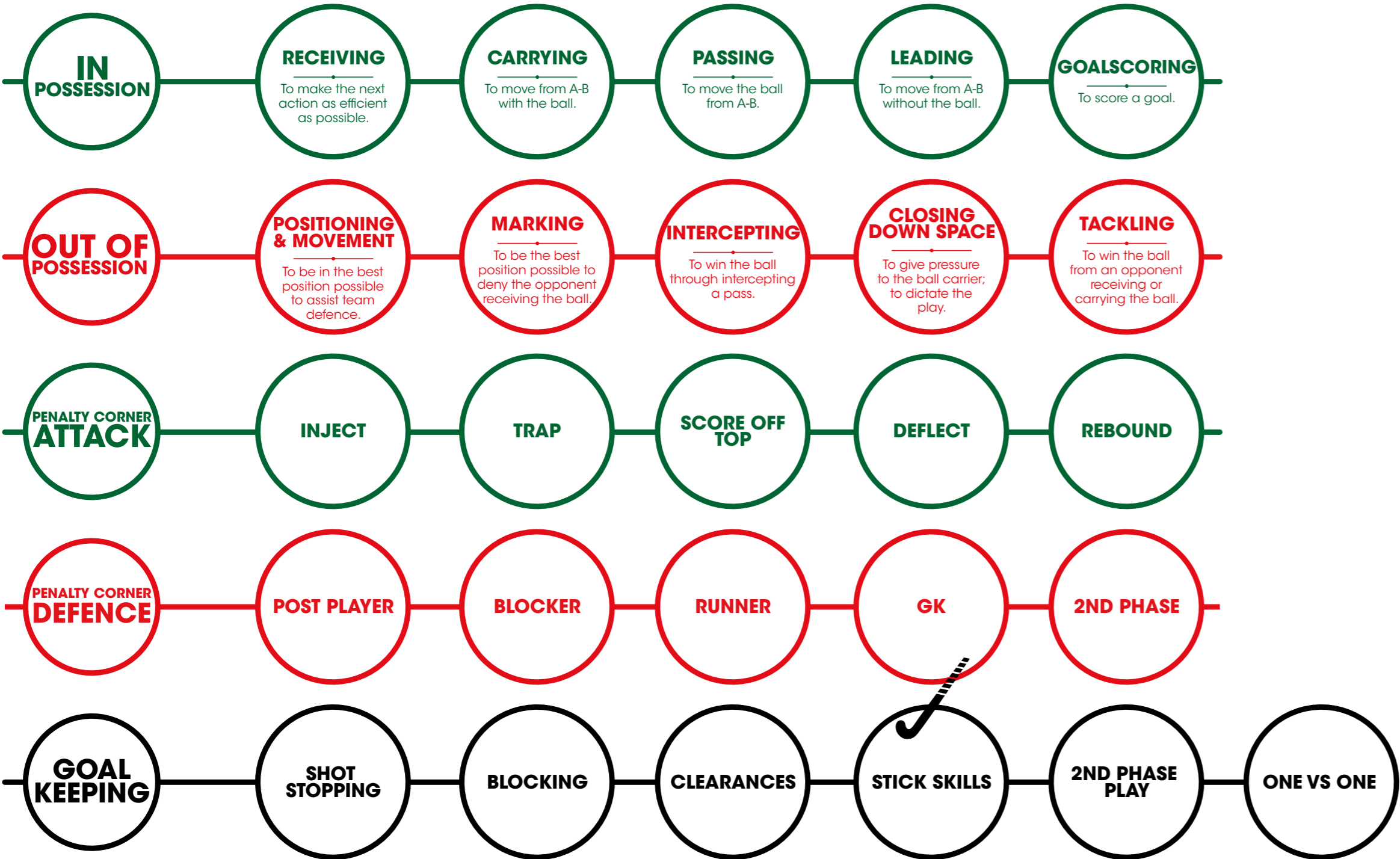
Players and coaches can work on these different elements in training sessions. 'What if' scenarios / training sessions are a great way of getting players and coaches to problem-solve and rehearse, so when they occur in a match, there is common understanding about what to do.



HIGHLY SKILLED ACTIONS

Game Understanding leads the player to make a decision to **ACT**. The **ACTIONS** that they undertake at any moment in a game will differ player to player, moment to moment. The higher the level of play, the higher the quality of action required. To play at a senior International level, these actions have to be highly skilled and honed to a high level of execution with capability of a high level of detail. To improve our Highly Skilled Actions we need to pursue excellence and improve our coaching craft to deliver **Exceptional Hockey Basics** at the top end of the sport.

The actions can be simplified as follows:



To improve our Highly Skilled Actions we need to pursue excellence and improve our coaching craft to deliver Exceptional Hockey Basics at the top end of the sport. **WHERE DOES THIS GO ON THE PAGE?**

It is important to emphasise there are many different choices of technique within these actions. For example, within Scoring there are a variety of different techniques from a hit to a push, flick, deflection etc. Being able to select and execute the most effective Highly Skilled Action is important.

Within these Highly Skilled Actions, there are levels of complexity within each technique. As a hockey player develops the key elements of the game, we can layer complexity. Knowing when and how to add stretch to a player is the coaching craft.

Coaches will differ in their opinions of when to introduce different Highly Skilled Actions and different levels of complexity. Some maintain forehand is the best way to learn and play the game; some will argue that coaches should introduce reverse early as the game of hockey is becoming more and more multi-directional. There is no right or wrong, providing there is justification and have strong reasoning behind their decisions.

The focus for the coach is to ensure they understand the main coaching points of a technique so they can make sure they are watching these points and supporting players appropriately.



You can find more information about these Highly Skilled Actions and how you might coach them on the **HOCKEY HUB**

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

Hockey is a fast, dynamic game that calls upon a variety of physical attributes to perform at the elite level. Placing emphasis too early on one capability can be to the detriment of the individual.

The physical capabilities outlined on the next page are for Senior International athletes and it is important that coaches in the talent system understand the physical development of young people.

Hockey being an early sampling and late specialisation sport means that many of our young players will be playing a multitude of sports before and during their development of hockey. This exposure to other sports may aid physical development. **It is important that we take this physical development into account when looking at the player qualities, as these may help determine the superstrengths of a player.** It is also possible that through different sports, a player has been exposed to organised physical training - for example, in athletics - which again specifically aids superstrengths of an individual. This should be considered when we are looking at talent development.

It is also important to recognise that the physical capabilities of a goalkeeper and a field player are slightly different. A goalkeeper does not need to have the same level of aerobic conditioning as a field player, although a strong base will help them consistently perform through tournaments. However, speed endurance is extremely important for a goalkeeper – high repeatability of intense effort.

Nutrition is a key factor of physical capability. Ensuring players are well hydrated and take on the key nutrients to fuel and recover appropriately, allows their body to physically perform. Ensuring we educate correctly is a key consideration, especially at the Talent Development stage.



‘Clean sport’ is a critical aspect of hockey. As a sport hockey has core values of trust, integrity, teamship openness. Drugs (whether they are prohibited or recreational substances) can all affect the body and performance. Great Britain Hockey believe that all players have the right to participate in hockey knowing that they, and their team mates and their opposition do so cleanly.

Great Britain Hockey proudly support Clean Sport. Elite players (both at club and International level) must follow strict guidelines. GB Hockey are bound by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) to conduct a comprehensive programme, including educating and testing. Educating starts in the talent system and will continue into the Performance System.

For an aspiring player, it is important that they recognise they have full responsibility for any substance, supplement or medicine they use (or that is found in their system). They have complete strict liability.





PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

The different elements of Physical Capabilities are outlined here...



SPEED

Acceleration – the ability to rapidly increase running speed, from a walking or jogging start moving quickly into a high-speed action. This requires high levels of horizontal force production capability.

Maximum Velocity – the point at which a player has reached top end speed. This requires high levels of reactive or elastic strength.

Change of direction – the ability to decelerate, change direction and reaccelerate rapidly. This requires high levels of force absorption capability or eccentric strength.



CONDITIONING

Aerobic Endurance – the ability to continually perform an activity without tiring. During longer low intensity efforts aerobic respiration requires oxygen as the main source of energy. The heart pumps faster and breathing rate increases to increase oxygen levels to muscles. It is important for both field players and goalkeepers as rates between higher intensity efforts are improved with aerobic capability.

Repeated Sprint Ability – the ability to repeat high speed with short amount of rest. During rapid high intensity efforts anaerobic respiration is used. When the body requires immediate energy, it relies on stored energy sources rather than oxygen to fuel itself. This is important for outfield players due to the regular requirement for repeated high intensity sprinting actions, such as rapid change of direction. For goalkeepers, Repeated power ability is essential to the wide variety of movement skills they are required to express.



STRENGTH

Physical dominance – the ability to express strength in hockey specific situations i.e. hitting a ball, evading an opponent, protecting the ball during a carry etc. Required for both field players and goal keepers.

Robustness – the body's ability to withstand the physical demands of hockey training and game play. Stronger athletes are more resilient to injury and therefore able to train more regularly making themselves consistently more available.

Balance – the ability to stay in control of body movement. In hockey dynamic balance is required – which is the ability to maintain a center of gravity over a constantly changing base of support. Important for both field players and goal keepers.

Explosivity – the ability to produce large amounts of force in a small amount of time. Combines strength training with speed to increase power output. Extremely important for goal keepers. Is also required for field players.

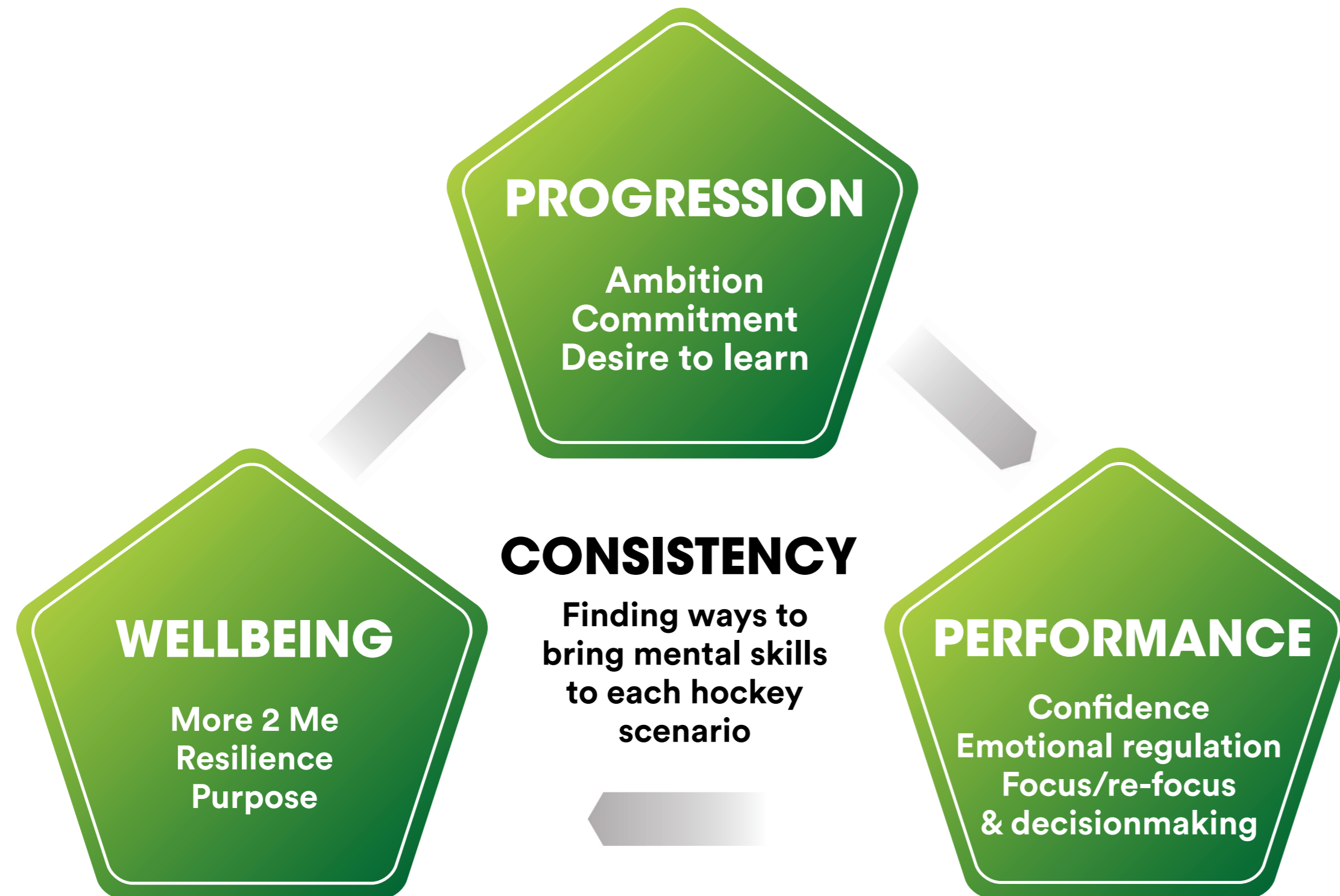


SPORTS NUTRITION

Combination of food and drink intake to maximise performance.

Timing, quantity and quality of both food and drink is vital in becoming the optimum player.

Rest/Active Recovery – whilst not a physical capability in its own right, it is still a very important element of being an International Hockey Player. The player is able independently to make good choices with respect to sleep and rest. Being able to listen to their body and understand the different types of soreness whether its muscle or joint and knowing whether it means they should continue to work through it or to seek rest are lessons every player will require and learn through experience.



MENTAL SKILLS

Mental skills are a huge part of a high-performing players qualities. Throughout the players journey, players will have to call upon different skills at different times to ensure their talent development progresses as they would like.

The following are mental skills that a player will benefit from. It is important that these skills are developed over the course of their journey. It is important that hockey coaches recognise opportunities to develop players' mental skills. (It is equally important to recognise that the brain matures much later than our physical capabilities and therefore, we should be careful about basing significant non-selection decisions on 'poor' mental skills / adolescent behaviours).

When someone has robust mental skills, not only do they have a strong combination of the skills set out below, but they also show consistency in delivering them through training and at Elite Level through the toughest competition.



BUILDING BLOCK

PROGRESSION

Psychological skills that help a player train harder and smarter than their peers over a more sustained period of time.

As a result, they have a greater chance of achieving world-class skills which underpin their confidence and ability to deliver when it counts.

MENTAL SKILL

AMBITION

WHAT WOULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

- ▶ They have a clear dream or goal and a massive inner drive to achieve it
- ▶ They are self-motivated
- ▶ They want to win but more importantly, they want to maximise their personal potential
- ▶ They have clear short, medium and long term goals

COMMITMENT

- ▶ They have a plan to maximise their chances of success. The plan includes: a realistic and objective assessment of what it will take, a breakdown of their dream goal into bitesize chunks and clear steps for how to improve, realistic time frames and strategies to avoid potential pitfalls. They believe in their plan.
- ▶ They show consistency in delivering the plan
- ▶ They can find the enjoyment or the meaning in repetitive, often gruelling training for sustained periods of time
- ▶ Their lifestyle facilitates what they want to achieve in sport
- ▶ They enjoy or find meaning in committing to daily training, regardless of outcome or what they might be missing out on. They see choices not sacrifices. And therefore are able to manage competing demands (e.g. sport, studying, social, downtime) and use their time effectively.
- ▶ They make the most of each session by being organised (i.e. on time, rested, right nutrition, equipment ready)
- ▶ They are disciplined in how they look after their body (e.g. warm up, cool down, rest, reporting niggles, rehab)

DESIRE TO LEARN

- ▶ They train hard and with a clear intention to improve
- ▶ They enjoy challenging themselves and push themselves out of their comfort zone to redefine what's possible in their game
- ▶ They focus on themselves; others are a source of inspiration or information
- ▶ They are willing to make mistakes in the pursuit of progress
- ▶ They are looking to optimise every aspect of my performance and proactively work with the relevant coaches – asking questions, watching footage, learning from others
- ▶ They learn from failure by maintaining perspective and taking the right level of responsibility. They don't blame, make excuses, respond dishonestly or unnecessarily beat myself up.
- ▶ They take the learning from feedback, even when they don't like the message



BUILDING BLOCK

PERFORMANCE

Psychological skills that help a player deliver their best performance under physical and mental pressure.

MENTAL SKILL

CONFIDENCE

WHAT WOULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

- ▶ They know what their strengths are and take confidence in them
- ▶ They take on board and benefit from positive feedback
- ▶ Confident in their skills, maybe it looks a little ruthless or like arrogance at times
- ▶ They prepare fully for tournaments, leaving no stone unturned which gives them the confidence to commit to the moment

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- ▶ They have a healthy perspective that allows them to play without fear and enjoy it the stage of competitive sport (i.e. not putting undue pressure on myself)
- ▶ They see competition and pressure as an opportunity to shine, to express themselves and put out their best performance
- ▶ They reliably manage emotions to achieve optimal composure in game (e.g. if too nervous / too relaxed)
- ▶ They understand how their brain works and their mental game contributes to their and their team's performance
- ▶ They understand how they can consistently perform at a high level and are able to focus on key aspects that allows them to bring that performance regularly in major competition.

FOCUS/RE-FOCUS

- ▶ They stay in the moment
- ▶ They let go of mistakes / distractions to refocus fully
- ▶ They are able to take on information from the coach and teammates in the moment and act accordingly
- ▶ They perceive and respond to critical moments effectively, factoring in the score, what my team mates are doing, what the opposition is doing, the game plan, and the clock
- ▶ They are able to solve complex problems under fatigue and pressure.
- ▶ They think clearly and quickly under pressure, bringing the right blend of courage to adapt and discipline to commit
- ▶ They make effective decisions, executing the right action at the right time
- ▶ They know when to lead others.
- ▶ They know when to follow and can be an infectious first follower





BUILDING BLOCK

WELL-BEING

Psychological skills that facilitate well-being and contribute to longevity of career.



Ask the question:

What has this player experienced in life that could help us understand their behaviour?

This will help us engage most effectively.

These skills are also dynamic and vary across situations, relationships, stages of psychosocial development and in the context of one's life journey so far. Young people are not mini adults and these qualities are highly developable. Players are encouraged to focus on their strengths and effectively mitigate weaknesses – the path to perfection is never complete.

MENTAL SKILL

MORE2ME

- ▶ They have interests, relationships and a sense of identity outside of sport
- ▶ They value themselves as a person and do not base that on results
- ▶ They have a strong family and friend support network who they connect with when they need to
- ▶ They are able to switch off from sport and enjoy life outside

RESILIENCE

- ▶ They persevere in the face of challenge and adversity
- ▶ They bounce back from setbacks quickly and with a smarter, stronger will to succeed
- ▶ They are always looking to find a way to win, even from the most adverse moments on the pitch and in life
- ▶ They are able to embrace and learn from difficult messages
- ▶ They can embrace hardship, physically and mentally, to better their game and grow as a person
- ▶ They open up when they need support and are willing to embrace their vulnerability to grow through challenges

PURPOSE

- ▶ They understand their purpose to compete at Elite level is deeper than the competition.
- ▶ Their purpose is linked to their 'why' – what helps this person to feel fulfilled in life
- ▶ They demonstrate a desire to understand their 'why' and stay true to this

It is very rare, if not impossible, to find a player with all these mental skills – some skills will be more important for certain players or certain positions than others.

The environment, both at home and in sport, plays a pivotal role in how the qualities discussed are developed and expressed. Coaches and practitioners should seek to understand a player's early life experiences and family background alongside their sporting experiences.



TEAMSHIP SKILLS

Teamship Skills are very important in a team game such as hockey. They are the psychological skills that help a player thrive in the team environment, working effectively with others and making the team better through their impact on others.

These skills can influence how successful a team will be. They involve the following skills, and again stakeholders throughout the talent system should be aware of these skills and find opportunity to discuss and develop the skills in their environment. Individual development of Teamship skills can be developed in any social setting - it does not have to be just through sport. The importance of school, for example, in conflict resolution and developing communication skills, can all influence this area.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- ▶ They have the capacity to empathise with the other persons viewpoint
- ▶ They pay attention to the feelings being expressed.
- ▶ They have the ability to seek compromise.
- ▶ They can manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm.

COMMUNICATION

- ▶ They compliment and praise their team mates regularly.
- ▶ They are able to express themselves and be understood.
- ▶ They understand the implications of the different tones that can be used when communicating.
- ▶ They understand how to communicate through body language both on and off the field.
- ▶ They can conduct themselves in a 1-1; peer group; small group and large group with effective communication at all levels.
- ▶ They can actively listen and use others information to relay communication clearly.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- ▶ They understand their own emotions and are able to self-regulate knowing the impact that it can have on others around them.
- ▶ They understand what others are feeling during meetings and conversations
- ▶ They can demonstrate attunement – the ability to tune into others feelings and act appropriately.
- ▶ They are willing and able to challenge others effectively
- ▶ They demonstrate an interest in the lives of their teammates
- ▶ They are an attentive listener
- ▶ They are aware of how their words and actions impact others on the team and strive for this to be consistently positive
- ▶ They adjust their behaviour and style to fit the nature of a conversation, relationship or moment



LEADERSHIP

- ▶ They appreciate that leadership positions hold power and they know how to positively use this power.
- ▶ They act as a role model to others
- ▶ They recognise that leadership can be delivered in many different styles and can recognise their leadership style.
- ▶ They take responsibility for themselves, their possessions, their actions and others within the team.
- ▶ They can inspire and motivate others with through their communication and actions.
- ▶ They can actively listen.
- ▶ They have the ability to involve everyone within the team.

COLLABORATION

- ▶ They are able to work with others to problem solve.
- ▶ They are able to understand personal strengths and how that fits with the team.
- ▶ They can help determine team strengths and how this can be utilised to improve the function of a team.
- ▶ They can help determine the most important areas to improve as a team.
- ▶ They are able to determine personal weaknesses and how the team may mitigate for this.
- ▶ They are willing to take on different projects, no matter how challenging or tedious, for the good of the team.
- ▶ They share credit for team achievements.
- ▶ They put the team before themselves.
- ▶ They feel a sense of responsibility for the overall success of the team.
- ▶ They are willing to contribute to and think about the teams mission outside of core training hours.
- ▶ They contribute positively to team culture.

SECTION 5 PARTNERSHIPS

All those involved in the development of young players need to find ways to work together and demonstrate that they...

**understand
respect
& recognise**

...the importance of each other's role.

Each stakeholder needs a better and common knowledge and understanding of Talent Development in order to contribute positively to an environment that could increase the likelihood of young players becoming successful adult performers.



ROLE OF A COACH WORKING WITH FUTURE POTENTIAL

Coaches and the environments they create are the foundations of talent development and a lifelong passion for the game. With the player at the heart of the Talent System, their coaches and the learning environments they create are inescapably linked. This is why coaching is one of the key priority areas within the Talent System.

Many of the Olympians that we ask “who was your most influential coach?” will always reply with a few names but one they never miss out is their main coach at the key developmental age between 11 and 18; and often their first coach that gave them passion for the sport. Their improvements at a young age are often dedicated to a great coach.

A great coach dedicates time and energy to individual improvement (alongside leading the team). They recognise the importance of individual connection and differentiation whilst ensuring the team ethos is always prominent. It is a clever and fine balance of developing both the individual and the team. Ultimately, hockey is a team sport made up of a group of individuals. A great coach recognises the importance of investing time in both. Player improvement takes time and as such the investment is not session by session but over a season or longer.

The ability of a coach to skilfully observe and intentionally interact with the players is the art of great coaching. To then review against those intentions by considering the effects of those interactions and the changes in the player will allow the coach to continually grow their coaching craft.

Historically, overt recommendations on the ‘How’ of coaching were at the forefront of our Talent Development guidance. We are now able to place the ‘What’ of coaching more explicitly at the forefront.

The Golden Thread is still one of the most valuable models to use when considering how to coach and is just as relevant when looking to coach Highly Skilled Actions and the techniques therein. The increased detail of what to coach is bound very tightly to an understanding of the Complete player qualities and the optimum learning environment which will all merge to create the optimum player experience at any stage of their development.

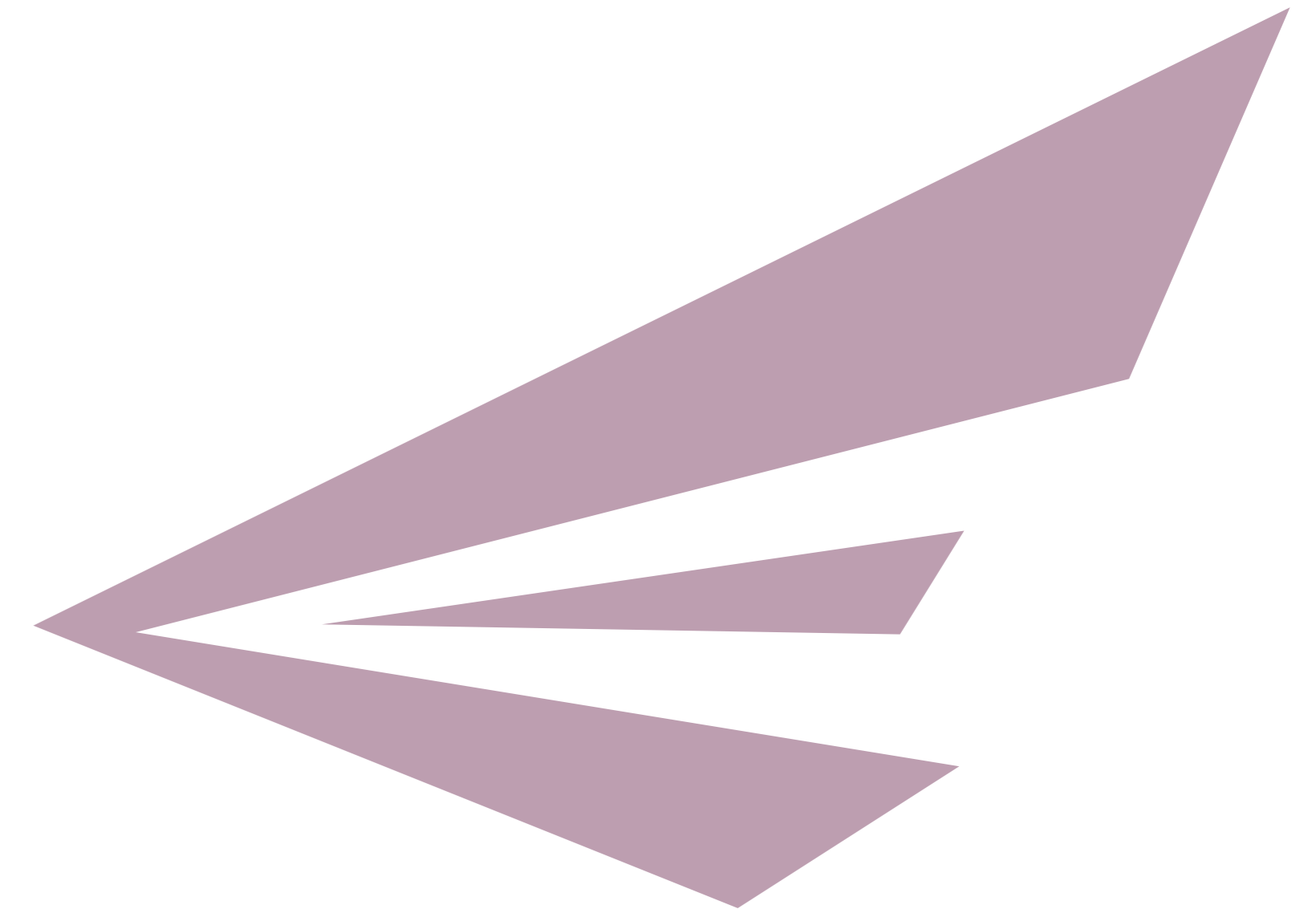
The role of the Coach is recognised as momentous and far-reaching across all aspects of the Talent System. They will be focused on the what as well as the how and will need to relentlessly consider the hockey context of the players they are trying to help. This will be demonstrated in their efforts to evaluate and understand their players against the Complete Player Qualities and the Hockey Experience Model. Coaches will use this to ensure their players can thrive and are able to access the optimum environment for their age, stage and needs so that they have an excellent hockey experience.

The role of the Coach in developing themselves, their craft, supporting the player, creating outstanding environments and being a student of the game is of immeasurable importance and is why we have developed a Talent Coach Profile.



TALENT COACH PROFILE

The Talent Coach Profile is made up of 4 characteristics
SELF, PLAYER, ENVIRONMENT and **GAME**
and **10 COACH QUALITIES**



SELF

Coaches who know themselves and why they coach, striving to continually develop and improve.

SELF AWARENESS

A coach can reflect on themselves and their coaching practice, behaviours and actions and the impact they have on others

A coach can clearly articulate their roles and responsibilities to the environment and players they are working with

SELF MOTIVATION

A coach can articulate their coaching philosophy, that guides their coaching practice, behaviours and actions

A coach is curious and open to learning to develop themselves and their coaching practice based on the needs of the players

SELF MANAGEMENT

A coach who manages their own personal health and wellbeing, so they can consistently be their best to help others

GAME

Coaches who develop their knowledge and understanding of hockey appropriate to the participant need.

HOCKEY INTELLIGENCE

A coach has robust knowledge of game understanding (Principles, Phases, Tactics, Context and Structure) and can apply in their coaching craft and practice

A coach has robust knowledge of the Highly Skilled Actions and can apply in their coaching craft and practice

A coach is able to deal with the varying game trends, rule changes and how it may impact on their coaching environment

A coach can demonstrate how they link practice to competition and utilise available technology to develop game understanding and skill acquisition

HOCKEY CONTEXT

A coach can support successful transition in and out of talent environments to support individual players development and lifelong participation



PLAYER

Coaches who build effective and sustainable relationships, with and around the player, to support their needs.

COMPLETE PLAYER QUALITIES

A coach can articulate 'What is Talent' and the core Talent Principles

A coach has robust knowledge of the Complete Player Qualities

A coach has knowledge of talent identification and profiling to determine a player's Individual Development Plan

COACH-PLAYER RELATIONSHIPS

A coach can guide and support players needs for holistic development, making better people on and off the field

A coach can build effective and appropriate relationships with a range of stakeholders to support them in line with agreed development and performance goals

ENVIRONMENT

Coaches who are architects of environments that optimise learning, where players feel valued and actively participate in their own development.

EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

A coach can create positive learning environments for players to thrive, develop and perform in, towards reaching their potential

COACHING CRAFT AND PRACTICE

A coach can integrate different coaching approaches in their environment, justifying their effectiveness that support the development and performance of individual players and teams

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

A coach can deliver a learning environment which recognises and promotes diversity, encourages challenge, enjoyment and achievement

A coach who performs their duties in an ethically responsible way, always play by the rules and protect the integrity of the sport

HOW CAN WE USE THE TALENT COACH PROFILE?

- 1** The profile can be used by coaches for self-evaluation; it can aid coaches in their understanding of the areas they need to focus on for their development. These needs, once identified, can be scoped out against any support that might be required within the Talent Environment.
- 2** The profile should be the tool that is used to create the coach's learning and development plan.
- 3** The profile can help identify excellent practitioners and may be used as a recruitment tool.
- 4** The profile can be used by clubs, schools, and talent entities to evaluate the quality of provision being delivered in their environment. Not all coaches will be equipped with the complete range of qualities in the profile, but they may be present across multiple coaches to enable them to deliver an excellent learning environment.



In creating a healthy talent environment, along with the key building blocks of coherent and consistent messages, player centred focus, long-term aims and individual development, alignment with the elements of a strong motivational climate is imperative.

ROLE OF A PARENT

Parental involvement in supporting their child to thrive and to recognise the moments where the player is on the player experience model and how best they can support the player, both directly with the player and indirectly with wider partnerships, is critical to support and develop the player within the Talent System.

Parental support can be described against the following headings:

OPPOSED = either overtly critical of, or covertly against the child's development within hockey.

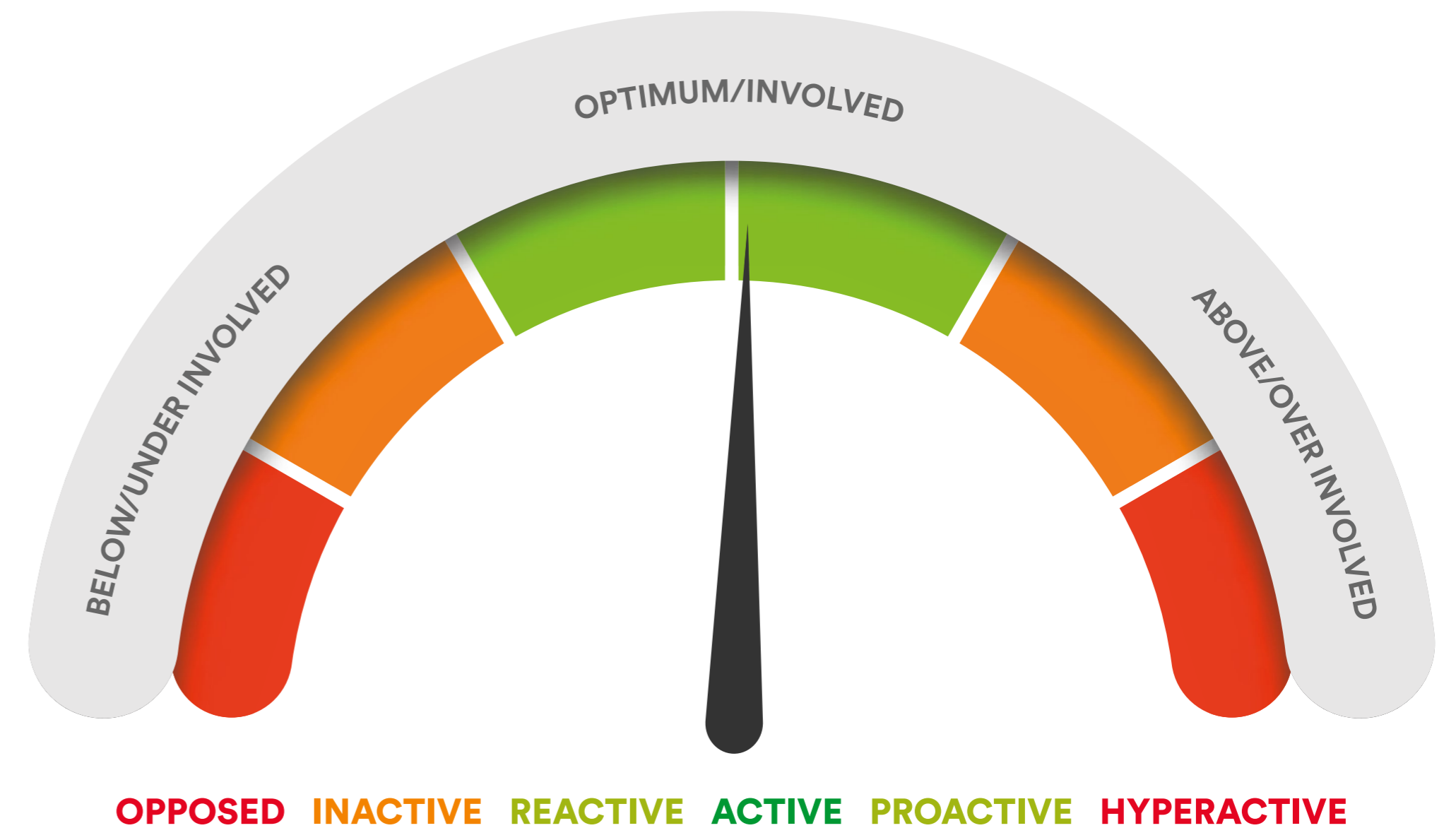
INACTIVE = parents have no knowledge of the game of hockey and are not really committed to their child's development within the sport.

REACTIVE = parents respond to an engagement (from child or other partnerships involved in their hockey). For example, their child comes home from training upset about the position they played and the parent acts on that situation.

ACTIVE = parents are present and therefore ready to engage with other partnerships if required. For example, the parent is present for the match and sees their child only playing in one position that they have previously stated they don't enjoy and can act on that situation.

PROACTIVE = parents are involved and can therefore instigate engagement. For example, the parent already knew that the child would be playing out of position to provide more stretch and therefore proactively discussed with the child acting on this situation.

HYPERACTIVE = parents are too in control and constantly engaged; they are often trying to make decisions for their child and stifling their child's progression. For example, the parent sees that their child is playing out of position and immediately confronts the coach mid-game.



This graphic shows that there is an optimum level of involvement from parents to fully enhance their child's experience.

For example, one parent may have very poor knowledge about their child's sport, but be very enthusiastic about it; another might have excellent knowledge, but be disapproving or hostile. In this way, the table allows for different activation profiles in different situations. It builds on and seeks to identify the optimum engagement, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that parents should demonstrate in their involvement in their child's sport.

It is important to recognise that one size does not fit all, however, and that, for some children and young people, sport, as with schooling, is a private leisure space where they seek autonomy and where parents and carers are not necessarily welcome.

Therefore, parents' involvement needs to be flexible within the optimum level of involvement (green area), with children themselves allowed to denote which profile is best suited to them at each stage of their development.

What do we need to do as sporting parents?

One of the most important influencers is the parent and there are many ways in which the parents needs to interact with the Talent System and the Talent System with the parents.

- ▶ The talent system needs to **work with, support and educate parents** on how they help their child thrive - giving knowledge and understanding of the Player Experience Model and the 'Complete Player Qualities'.
- ▶ **Is my child thriving?** Is a good question to constantly ask yourself as a parent. Thriving is the central positive experience of the Player Experience Model. It is in the Thrive Zone that they progress the most, perform at their best and feel good about themselves. If you as a parent notice that one of these elements is restricted, then you could reactively, actively or proactively act to help them move back towards thriving.



ROLE OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

With a player at the heart of the Talent System, it is important that all stakeholders who have interest or interaction with the player should understand what role they might be playing on that player's experience. We have already described the role of the coach and the parent as key stakeholders of the player.

Below is a summary of the role other stakeholders have on a players experience:

CLUB MANAGEMENT (Chair/Board/Admin)

The club management should have a strong decision-making role on how they want their club to utilise and develop their players with potential. They develop the structure of both their youth and senior environments and how the two interact with one another. They have a strong cultural impact and help generate behaviours that underpin this culture. The Club Management, whilst not connecting directly with the player, will influence the Talent Journey of a player.

TEAM CAPTAIN

The team captain can have a very strong direct connection with the player. In talent foundation stage, the team captain is often the main point of communication when the player is first experiencing senior hockey. This is often through the lower senior teams as the player progresses and navigates their way to the right team for a good amount of Stretch. Team captains can ensure the player is in a positive place from a well-being perspective. How do they get to the match? Who supports them during the match? How are other team-mates reacting and interacting with them during the match? The team captain can help ensure the first experience of senior hockey is a positive experience. In talent development stages, it is more likely the team captain takes purely a leadership role on the field and is someone that the player will look up to as a role model. It is imperative that team captains support and challenge players and ensure they feel that the player has a chance to also be heard.

TEAM MANAGER

Team Managers are normally only present in the performance teams of the club. Therefore, a player will most likely interact with them when in talent development stages. The Manager's role is more organisational and logistical, so ensuring the player has everything they need to maintain their focus on performing. The manager can help a player learn to take responsibility for themselves and their possessions and encourage independent thinking.

WELFARE OFFICER

The Welfare Officer should be knowledgeable about all the players with potential that are playing in the Senior game. They should know who is taking responsibility for each player's well-being, performance and progression, and check in regularly with the player to ensure they feel they are thriving through their hockey environments.

SCHOOL TEACHERS (Not hockey coach/ teacher)

Teachers can help a player's experience by assisting in their feeling of well-being. A young person who is happy away from hockey often translates positively onto the field of play.

TEAMMATES

Teammates forget that they have a part to play in the experience of others, especially established teammates who have been part of the same team for a number of years. When integrating a new and young player into the squad, it is important that they are considerate to the emotions of this player. It can be a daunting experience, and ensuring socially and emotionally they feel part of the team, is important for their well-being and performance. Team mates can also have a direct impact on their progression. The nature of Stretch hockey can lead to gradual progression without any input from coach or team mates, but if teammates recognise the progression needs of a player they can help accelerate the learning. Supporting and positively challenging a teammate can stimulate learning, especially an experienced to inexperienced team mate.

UMPIRES

Umpires can also have a direct connection with a player that can impact their well-being and performance. An umpiring decision can turn a player's perception of a game to be positive and negative. Ensuring they speak during and after the match about any key decisions that may go for or against a team can be an important to the experience that a player has from the game. Especially when considering a young player – the interaction they may have with a young player could make or break their match. Umpires can also help teach emotional regulation to players; having those discussions with players can be really beneficial to their progression.

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY

Not a direct relationship with the player, but one that we would hope instigates positive change for the player experience. By evolving the Talent System; facilitating education and improved resource to support the different stakeholders; and through leadership of hockey intelligence and Complete Player Qualities, the NGB can influence the experience of players.



TALENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

